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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this practicum was to effect a substantial improvement in the academic and social profiles of 12 seventh-grade and 6 eighth-grade students with specific learning disabilities who had been targeted as potentially high risk candidates for dropping out of high school. Within a holistically based intervention model, five student objectives were sought: passing grades in at least three academic subjects, two electives, and physical education; an attendance profile that configured to district-based guidelines; demonstration of appropriate social skills; and a satisfactory conduct record. The practicum comprised such interventions and activities as self-esteem and social skill training, career orientation, motivational techniques, peer tutoring/mentors, a parent telephone hotline, student progress reports, student tracking reports, and parent/teacher/student conferences. Expectations were exceeded at both the seventh and eighth grade levels in the areas of academics, attendance, and self-esteem. In addition, the eighth grade conduct objective was exceeded. The program has become an integral part of the exceptional education program in the practicum setting. Appendices contain several forms for use in administering the practicum. (Contains approximately 70 references.) (JDD)

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# Mediating At-Risk Factors Among Seventh and Eighth Grade Students With Specific Learning Disabilities Using a Holistically Based Model

by

Alice E. Buckner

Cluster 37

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A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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## PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Alice E. Buckner under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

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# ABSTRACT

A Holistically Based Model to Mediate "At-Risk" Factors Among Seventh and Eighth Grade Students With Specific Learning Disabilities. Melbourne, FL, 1993: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors: Social Skills Training/ Career Orientation/ Self-Esteem Building/ Motivational techniques/ Peer Tutors/ Mentors/ Parent Involvement.

The overall purpose of the practicum was to effect a substantial improvement in the academic and social profiles of 12 seventh grade and 6 eighth grade students with specific learning disabilities who had been targeted as potentially high risk candidates for high school dropout. Within a holistically based interventional model, five student objectives were sought: passing grades in at least three academic subjects, two electives, and physical education; an attendance profile that configured to district based guidelines; demonstration of appropriate social skills; and a satisfactory conduct record.

Program components were designed to mediate deficient areas among practicum students. An integrated model, the practicum was comprised of interventions and activities that included self-esteem and social skill training; career orientation, motivational techniques; peer tutor/mentors, and parent involvement.

Excellent results were realized from the practicum effort. Expectations were exceeded for both seventh and eighth grade students in the areas of academics, attendance, and self-esteem. Moreover, the eighth grade conduct objective was exceeded. Having produced credible effects for "at-risk" students with specific learning disabilities, the program has become an integral part of the exceptional education program in the practicum setting. The presenting data suggested that an integrated learning experience, parent involvement, the development of career goals, and an interactive learning environment hold high potential to cause students to sufficiently engage in the learning experience in order to produce acceptable academic and social profiles, positive self-esteem, satisfactory attendance, and satisfactory conduct profiles.

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### Description of the Work Setting

A product of a once conservative community, this thirty year old inner-city junior high school is located on the southeast coast of the United States. Its surrounding population of 67,500 is a direct result of an influx of high-tech personnel which was required in order to build and sustain the continuous growth of the locality's high-tech industries. An area in transition, its diverse student population is derived from seven elementary feeder schools of which minorities contribute approximately 13% while whites present the remaining 87%. Over time, a changing socio-economic student profile has gradually developed. Largely middle class at its origin, its construct has become low to low-middle. At the time of the practicum, nearly 34% of the student population qualified for free or reduced lunch. Transported largely by bus, students spend a minimum of 15 minutes per one way trip with those in outlying areas riding as long as 45 minutes. Because bus has become the primary mode of transportation, extracurricular activities are beyond the reach of most students.

Based on a student population of 1,340 within the practicum setting and a feeder school population of approximately 5,700, the projection for the upcoming school year was 1,450 --- a figure that exceeded recent three-year projections.

Committed to the provision of creative and innovative programs and/or interventions when addressing the individual needs of a diverse student population, all school personnel are engaged in the educational process. From maintenance personnel to the administrative quarter, the needs and best interests of students are of primary concern. A global, humanistic philosophy which is fueled by pragmatic ideology is consistently generated by the School SIC in response to input from all shareholders (i.e., parents, educators, students, school service personnel, and members of the business community).

Composed of 72 largely committed teachers who address both the academic and affective requirements of students, the faculty has developed a cohesive relationship in which to address the multi-needs of all those who have become a part of, interact with, or impact the school community. Sixty-two basic education teachers collaborate within a team format to provide integrative services and to facilitate the educational experience for the vast majority of the school population. Moreover, 10 exceptional education teachers administer to the differentiated needs of the better than 13% exceptional student population across four exceptionalities: Emotionally Handicapped, Gifted, SLD (self-contained/full time), SLD (resource/part time), and Severely Emotionally Disturbed.

Permeating the practicum setting, holistic ideology sets the stage for its philosophical format. Parent and community involvement in overall school objectives is readily apparent in the real world orientation that characterizes the nature of activities which are generated within a recently implemented state inspired program. Aspiring to the high ideals of America 2000: An Education Strategy (1991) and its state adopted counterpart, the SIC works effectively toward reform and accountability. Evolutionary in concept, the committee employs a facilitative leadership style to meet its goals and objectives. Moreover, the SIC schedules extracurricular activities which provide informal opportunities for committee members to gain a broader perspective of school needs and to develop relationships with one another that maximize the potential for committee efficacy.

## Writer's Work Setting and Role

Multi-dimensional in perspective and holistically oriented, the writer assumes a proactive position within both the school setting and community. Certified in psychology, specific learning disabilities, and gifted education, her teaching assignment encompasses the facilitation and instruction of Language Arts, learning strategies, and leadership skills. Fundamental to all three areas of instruction are the pragmatic considerations that underlie student acquisition of marketable skills.

As a supervising instructor for a state university and as a "Demonstration Classroom Teacher", the writer assumes a facilitative leadership role in the interest of intern teachers and provides on-site process training opportunities for educators through a district sponsored program.

At the school based level, the writer is an active member of the school Guidance Committee, sponsor of the National Junior Honor Society, coordinator and liaison between parents, school, and community for the Parent Advisory Committee, and a member of the SIC.

Proactive on the issue of educational reform, the writer assumes the following positions at the district level: Council for Exceptional Children (President); Very Special Arts Executive Committee (Chair); member of the 11th District Congressional Educational Advisory Board; member of the Exceptional Education Advisory Committee; member of the Alternative Education Task Committee; member of the Task Committee for District-Wide Testing; member of the Capital Outlay Committee; and member of the Teacher of the Year Selection Committee. Moreover, the writer is currently a member of a doctoral level networking team for American 2000: An Education Strategy and a member of the Nova University Student/Graduate Advisory Committee.

# CHAPTER II

## Study of the Problem

Throughout history, the public education system has consistently been challenged to effectively address the needs of its population in relation to rapidly changing times and conditions. While its national agenda was significantly affected by a number of socio-political issues, budgetary constraints, and the enormous power of special interest groups which impacted each decade, public education demonstrated the ability to maintain its credibility in providing quality services to American youth until the early 1980s. However, with the publication of a staggering report by the National Commission on Excellence in which pervasive incompetency among high school graduates and an alarmingly high drop-out rate was documented, came a societal loss of innocence (A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Research, 1983).

Disillusioned by the skill deficiency among high school graduates, the business sector became increasingly proactive in educational programming and decision making. Parents moved into proactive positions within the structure of school based management, and the national agenda was revamped to reflect societal concern. In response, President Bush presented America 2000: An Education Strategy to the nation on April 18, 1991. Presenting goals and objectives for public education which address societal interests for the year 2000 and beyond, the initiative set the stage for commensurate state and local action.

The most immediate manifestation of the national ideology within statewide policy was the rapid incorporation of SIC within the school based management system. Comprised of a diverse membership, the committees were mandated to include members from school faculties, administration, classified workers, parents, students, a union representative, and members of the business sector. The purpose of the construct is to facilitate the restructuring of individual schools by providing local orientation in which all vested interests can be efficiently addressed.

Because of the specificity of the orientation of the proposed practicum to students with SLD, the nature and ideology which are fundamental to both school philosophy and the SIC are particularly important. Thus, both the membership diversification and the global concepts which exist within these complimentary systems are likely to serve the best interests of both regular and exceptional education students alike.

## Historical Perspective

Although the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) paved the way for the provision of special services for all handicapped children within the least restrictive environment, time has provided the opportunity to develop a different perspective regarding the delivery system for special programs (Hallahan and Kauffmann, 1988).

Perhaps one of the most revealing documents to challenge the original orientation of special education programs is Madeleine Will's 1986 report to the secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Service U.S. Department of Education. Scrutinizing the traditional delivery system, Will contends that the anticipated success of segregated learning experience is often ineffective in terms of student ability to generalize skills, and the restrictive atmosphere of the learning environment itself has produced negative social results for many.

Moreover, the author contends that of the 25 percent dropout rate, "many of these dropouts are students with learning problems who have not succeeded in special programs" (p.4).

To retain the merits of special education programming, while removing the negative consequences of the foregoing manifestations, Will supports the REI in which students with learning disabilities are moved into mainstream settings where support services are provided to all students (regular and exceptional) who require them. According to the author, through a regular and exceptional education collaboration, the needs and best interests of all learners can be effectively addressed.

Following a longitudinal study relative to school programs and performance of students with SLD, Wagner (1990) maintained that the adoption of appropriate, relevant policies, programs, and interventions could actually reduce the incidence of high school dropout from 18 to one percent. Given that scenario, restructuring could present a viable option to the pervasiveness of the problem.

## Problem Description

The existing problem within the proposed practicum setting was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth grade students with SLD had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on either failing grades in two or more core subject areas or excessive absences, causing the respective students to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category.

Despite numerous innovative and creative programs to enhance educational opportunities in the proposed practicum setting, the incidence of academic failure and absenteeism among SLD students had not improved substantially over time. In addition, deficiencies among this population were apparent in the adjunct areas of social and organizational skills, conduct, and self-esteem. Thus, it was apparent that there was an existing need to provide interventions and inducements for students who had been classified as "at-risk for dropout" to achieve passing grades, improve attendance habits, develop appropriate social and organizational skills, assume responsible conduct profiles, and develop a sense of heightened self-esteem.

Given the fact that the practicum school is deeply committed to the provision of programs and services to enhance opportunity for all students, the "Quality Circle" convened on five occasions during the prior school year to review policies and share ideas for mediating the debilitating effects of the acknowledged "at-risk" problem. Despite formidable programs and delivery systems and numerous interventions in previous years, the high incidence of "at-risk" SLD students was still an enigma. Therefore, it was determined that, utilizing the SIC as a vehicle, information would be sought from all stakeholders. Comprised of primary and secondary administrators, three guidance counselors, and three exceptional education teachers, the "Quality Circle" reviewed the resulting data and made three recommendations: develop specific criteria to determine eligibility for "at-risk" classification; screen the SLD student population to determine the incidence of the problem; and provide individual academic and social counseling coupled with periodic parent/student/teacher/counselor conferences to students whose profiles matched the criteria.

## Problem Documentation

While the "Quality Circle" plan was in effect for a period of five months, little improvement resulted. Most parents of "at-risk" students either failed to attend conferences or attended sporadically. Counselors reported that, during parent contacts, most appeared to be as apathetic as the students themselves. One interesting exception was noted. Two parents of the then currently identified "at-risk" students had been participants in the writer's previous practicum effort which involved effective participation of parents in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process. Both were enthusiastic participants in the project and, reportedly, brought their newly acquired skills to the "at-risk" intervention. Of the two, one had a student who ultimately managed to pass the grade level for the year while the other failed. However, the intervening guidance counselor reported that the latter student had made a concerted effort to pass the grade level and failed by a substantially smaller margin than existed initially.

Given the pervasiveness of the problem and the unsuccessful attempts at mediation within the proposed practicum setting, the writer was committed to devising a solution strategy to reduce the incidence of "at-risk" factors among students who had been classified in that category --- thereby increasing the potential for respective students to successfully proceed from one grade level to another without interruption. Thus, the following procedures were employed to determine the existence and scope of the problem.

First, a review of year-end grade reports and attendance records of SLD students revealed that 12 seventh grade students and six eighth grade students failed to pass the 1991-1992 school year. Having failed two or more core subject areas, six seventh grade students also exceeded the allowable number of absences and would have qualified for failure in that area alone. However, none of the seventh grade students failed solely on the basis of excessive absences. Of the eighth grade students, six failed two or more core subject areas, of whom three exceeded the allowable number of absences and would have qualified for failure in that area alone. However, none of the eighth grade students failed solely on the basis of excessive absences.

Second, a review of guidance counselor reports revealed three conditions. First, all 12 seventh grade students and all six eighth grade students demonstrated behaviors that were indicative of low self-esteem. Second, poor social skills were recorded for seven of the seventh grade students and four of the eighth grade students.

Third, a review of year-end grade reports indicated that 12 seventh grade students and six eighth grade students received non-satisfactory conduct grades from a minimum of three teachers.

In establishing the selection criteria for at-risk SLD students, the "Quality Circle" established three guidelines. First, selected students must have failed for reasons other than "lack of ability". In other words, verification of appropriate academic placement must precede selection. Second, selected students must have failed for reasons other than those which were beyond their control (i.e., absenteeism because of family illness). Three, selected students must have failed for reasons that were unrelated to any other known disability.

Once the existence and scope of the problem had been established and the foregoing three conditions had been applied, selection was made based on grade retention for either academic failure and/or failure due to excessive absences.

## Causative Analysis

### Writer Perspective of Causal Factors

Writer experience and observation in conjunction with a preliminary review of the data suggest a number of causes that have varying degrees of potential to impact both the incidence and scope of the "at-risk" problem. Five categories are involved.

First, given the socio-economic complexities of the nineties, American families are hard pressed to meet the multi-needs which exist within their configurations. As a result, junior high school parents often fail to actively prioritize educational values and accept the responsibility for monitoring their childrens' educational progress at school and at home. More commonly, parents tend to regard the educational process from a parochial perspective. Believing that education is the fundamental and exclusive responsibility of the public school system, there is a tendency to displace the total responsibility for the child's education to school personnel. As a result, the cohesive aspects of parent/school relationships are often deficient.

Second, deficient student self-esteem, brought about by chronic failure, frequently encourages disengagement from the learning process. Clearly, children who occupy seats in classrooms, where successful experience is elusive and failure is a frequent condition, often internalize attributions that produce a syndrome of negative consequence. As a result, students often experience embarrassment and humiliation in front of peers --- a situation that frequently leads to disenchantment and absenteeism.

Third, inadequate parent involvement during both the development of the child's IEP and in all aspects of its implementation has the potential to cause the student to attribute parent disinterest to self and to the educational process in general. Without parental interest and involvement, the child often feels devalued. Thus, little motivation surfaces to engage in the learning process.

Fourth, the tendency of some mainstream teachers to regard low achievement as the norm for students with learning disabilities often contributes to student internalization of that attribution. However inadvertent, when conveyance of a lower than norm expectation occurs, the student tends to comply with the anticipated standard --- thus preventing the overall growth and development that is critical to the learning process.

Five, failure of educators to provide multi-sensory experiences within the classroom often causes certain students to become lost in the struggle to inculcate skills. Because accessing modes differ among students, opportunity to gain information in a variety of ways is essential to efficient processing. Nonetheless, many mainstream teachers continue to maintain a primarily didactic posture in the delivery of content --- often causing non-auditory learners to disengage.

Although the practicum setting was geared to embrace a holistic philosophy with regard to the educational needs of its population, severe budgetary cuts had impacted the realization of that goal. Faced with oversized class loads and fewer resources than ever before, the ideology and methodology that normally command teacher attention to the differentiated qualities and needs of students was overly ambitious given current conditions within the teaching/learning environment. In as much, those practices and procedures that were once commonplace became less than feasible. For example, in the past, seventh and eighth grade teachers collaborated within a teaming configuration to produce integrated learning experience for students. Originally constructed around the four core subject areas, respective teachers had common planning periods during which integrated planning and parent teacher/ student conferences took place. Within this format, the four resident teachers interacted with elective, vocational, and physical education teachers to provide continuity to the program and address the individual strengths and weaknesses of students. While teams still exist, larger class loads and student scheduling problems have reduced opportunities for personalization and attention to differentiation. In as much, some "at-risk" students may go unnoticed.

## Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

In addition to writer perspective regarding causative applications, the literature is replete with evidence of both the magnitude and pervasiveness of the academic failure and chronic absenteeism problem within the public education system --- two situations which have been widely linked to the eventuality of high school dropout. According to Ramsey, the U.S. Department of Education's 1992 report to Congress on Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Chapter 3, stated that "students with disabilities make up one of the largest groups of dropouts (Florida Today, August 4, 1992, p. 5D). Commenting further, the author maintained that dropout rates for this category actually exceed the 40 percent figure which is typically attributed to urban communities --- a figure that has staggering ramifications.

During the preliminary review, a number of factors surfaced which shed light on the significance of academic and social failure and its relationship to the ultimate identification of "at-risk for dropout" students.

Clearly, the "at-risk for dropout" problem which currently pervades the nation's public school system is widely documented in the literature. According to a 1987 U.S. Department of Labor report, approximately 25 percent of the nation's students ultimately abort the public education construct and become statistical societal victims because of skill deficiencies (Baker and Sansone, 1990; Schauer, 1990; Strother, 1986). In addition to the debilitating social, economic, and psychological effects for the individual, the associated demand for social services cripples the nation's economy (Gage, 1990). Concurring, Thompson (1986) claims that the dropout problem has reached crisis proportions beyond the obvious social and economic implications.

Citing the State Education Leader (a quarterly of the Education Commission of the States), the author maintains that students who comprise the "at-risk" category are also a severe threat to the nation's political composition. Two further attestments to the severity of the situation are evidenced in the "Section Notes" of the June 8, 1991 and August 3, 1991 issues of the Congressional Quarterly which indicate the passing of the School Dropout Demonstration Assistant Act (HR 2313) of June 3, 1991 and the allocation of respective funds to institute prevention programs. Despite national legislation to decrease the incidence of academic failure among "at-risk" student populations, more than 600,000 students continue to leave school prior to graduation each year.

A wide variety of causes have been attributed to the occurrence of "at-risk" students within the nation's educational systems --- not the least of which is directed toward family constructs. With SLD students comprising a major portion of that group, it is incumbent upon exceptional educators to maintain vigilant positions in assessing the underlying causes of academic failure and chronic absenteeism. Because the child's education begins within the family construct, its influence is a primary factor in developing preschool concepts and attitudes which will ultimately lay the foundation for formal learning. For example, Cole's Theory of Interactivity (1987) strongly supports the view that family conditions and structures (or lack of them) are highly instrumental in producing deficiencies in learning.

## Demographics and Family Influences

While Tapply (1985) argues that "at-risk" students are the products of varying backgrounds and orientations, the incidence of poverty is a clear indicator within urban areas where dropout rates are frequently in excess of 40 percent (Florida Today, August 4, 1992, p. 50; Lee, Luppino, and Plionis, 1990). Characterizing the most likely candidate for dropout, Cook (1990) maintains that the minority student with low socio-economic status is a natural target. Less likely to have positive role models and family resources to provide incentives and develop clear rationales for acquiring an education, the child often enters school without the mindset and motivation that is essential to successful learning experience. Nonetheless, schools tend to avoid early screening --- thereby contributing to the causal elements (academic failure and/absenteeism) that ultimately relegate students to "at-risk" classification.

Cavazos (1989) supports the view that the major socio-economic group to produce "at-risk" children is that enormous faction that currently exists at the poverty level of American society. Moreover, the author suggests that, by the year 2000, nearly a third of all school aged children will be "at-risk." By the time these children enter school, it is often apparent that they are deficient in the areas of sound health and diet as well as in intellectually and emotionally stimulating venture. According to the author, two other causes are associated with the production of a high "at-risk" profile: chronic lack of relevancy of educational objectives to real world goals and failure of the nation's schools to conduct early identification procedures. More commonly, interventions to identify "at-risk" factors do not occur until the child reaches the secondary level.

In accord with the Cavavos (1989) position, Lee, Luppino, and Plionis (1990) cite poverty as the major "at-risk" indicator. Many within this population survive on public assistance and are clearly victims of the overall "ills of society." In a report addressing the high ideals of the president's national agenda, Gage (1990) maintains that poverty and cultural differences between teachers and students are two substantial "at-risk" factors that present high potential for dropout. While poverty is a known indicator, the author suggests that cultural mismatches between the classroom delivery systems and the child's experience level often cause the child to view the content as irrelevant to real-world situations --- thus creating a barrier to learning efficacy.

Commenting on the characteristics that underlie the ideology of low socio-economic status families, Strother (1986) contends that a disregard for the practical values of education is often conveyed to children prior to school entry. Because it is common for parents themselves to have experienced a lack of success in school endeavors, a tendency to devalue the importance of education is quite natural. Families that function at the poverty level have little incentive to aspire to anything other than that which is characteristic of the depressing conditions in which they live on a daily basis. Thus, according to Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986), high educational expectation for the children of those families is a rarity. On the contrary, most parents from low socio-economic circumstances have not benefited from sound formal educations themselves. As a result, assuming an interest in and monitoring their childrens' educations takes a low priority position. Thus, the offspring from this group tend to have few study aids in the home, insufficient opportunities to participate in relevant learning experiences, and no viable means of obtaining the social skills that are required to establish sound peer relationships.

Mentioning such problems as learning disabilities and academic failure, Tapply (1985) alludes to the frustration that students experience in coping with school. Outlining a number of "at-risk" indicators, the author contends that many parents and educators fail to monitor students for signs of chronic absenteeism, academic failure, emotional problems and failure to interact with peers --- a set of conditions that are believed to impact the incidence of school dropout.

Lack of parent involvement in their childrens' educations has long since been recognized as a substantial problem. Among the restructuring efforts within the public school format is the recognition and emphasis on parent/teacher partnerships. According to Yanok and Derubertis (1989), despite the federal mandate (PL 94-142) which specifically accords parent participation rights during the development of the IEP, parents of exceptional education students are more likely to assume passive positions relative to their childrens' educational goals and more reluctant to participate in other aspects of their childrens' educations than parents of regular education students. Much of this reluctance, from the authors' perspective, stems from the failure of schools to train and encourage parents to assume equal status during decision making activities. Thus, lack of parent participation in the overall education of their children may very well constitute a condition that catapults children with SLD into a position of "at-risk for dropout".

Concurring, Buckner (1992) stated that ineffective parent involvement may be an important factor in the high incidence of "at-risk" children in the exceptional education categories --- a condition that was substantiated during a previous practicum effort in the writer's professional environment. Directed toward increasing parent participation and involvement in the IEP process, the thrust of the practicum was predicated upon the author's belief that lack of parent involvement in their childrens' educations was a major factor in contributing to the "at-risk" profile of children with SLD.

While a consensus exists that lack of parent involvement in the global aspects of their childrens' educations is highly detrimental to successful student outcomes and, in fact, contributes to the incidence of "at-risk for dropout", still another contributing factor appears to exacerbate the situation. In studying parent impact on student success (or lack of) patterns, Grant and Sleeter (1986) found that although educators recognize the need for effective parent participation, they frequently discourage its development within families of low socio-economic status because of preconceived expectations of inadequate performance. Yet, it is this population from which "at-risk" children are most likely to come.

## Deficient Social Skills

While acknowledging the dynamic impact of both the socio-economic structure and value base within individual families on the ultimate success or failure of the student, Seidel and Vaughn (1991) maintain that "factors associated with school dropout can be grouped into several categories: demographic, family related, economic, peer-related, and student alienation" (p. 152). In a recent study, the authors investigated the importance of social alienation in connection with the potential for dropout among students with SLD. Findings indicated a strong parallel with the incidence of social alienation and high school drop out for this population. Two large contributors to this high "at-risk" factor are student inability to use effective social skills and student internalization of low teacher expectation. Thus, social skill incompetency appears to be a primary cause of student disassociation from the educational process.

In emphasizing the critical importance of social skill deficits in terms of "at-risk" indicators for students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe (1991) studied the deficiency in light of a contextualist model rather than within the framework of the widely accepted deficit model. While the latter model supported the belief that social skill deficits and social alienation were strictly categorical products of the learning disability, the former model "perceives the problem as a function of both the child and the system" (p. 83). Therefore, the causes connected with "at-risk" factors may need to be viewed in more global and interrelated terms.

In a 1990 study by Toro, Weisberg, Guare, and Liebenstein, deficiencies were clearly documented in the areas of social problem solving skills, conduct, and family traits --- thereby offering further credence to the compelling argument that social deficits constitute a high "at-risk" factor in determining the potential for dropout. In accord with the ideology that connects "at-risk" students and social skill deficits, Cartledge and Kleefeld (1989) maintain that social skill deficits are actually responsible for academic failure, interpersonal incompetence, and the inability to acquire marketable skills that lead to quality employment. Clearly supporting the view that students with SLD have a greater deficiency in these three areas than do non-learning disabled peers, the study gives strong support to the ideology that includes social deficiencies among the "at-risk" factors that may ultimately cause high profile students to abandon formal educational pursuit.

In assessing the nature and extent of social skill deficits among children with SLD, Forness and Kavale (1991) found that social skill development which is critical to a well rounded education is often impeded by poor self esteem which results when academic failure occurs. Although deficient social skills is by no means a condition that is reserved for children with SLD, it is widely acknowledged that this group is most susceptible to the deficiency. Asocial behavior is also evidenced in a study by Bryan, Pearl, and Herzog (1989) which indicates both a higher incidence of crime perpetration and of crime victimization than among non-learning disabled peers.

Although the acquisition of social skills is extremely important to all students, it is particularly critical to students with disabilities. When students are mainstreamed, their success is clearly contingent upon the ability to adapt to both the academic and social demands of the setting. Peer support is an essential characteristic of that endeavor. Still, many students with learning disabilities are sadly lacking in social skills and often alienate their peers rather than foster the much needed relationships. As a result, many become victims of an "at-risk" profile and ultimately drop out of school (Gottlieb and Leyser, 1981).

In the final analysis, social skill incompetency is a crippling disorder. If educators defer on this count, multitudes of children will be relegated to the ranks of social misfits who will enter society without the coping strategies to effect an appropriate life style. Johnson and Johnson (1990) speak to conditions that currently exist within the nation's classrooms. According to the authors, it is not uncommon for students to be highly lacking in cooperative learning skills and effective interaction with one another. Nonetheless, if unattended, students will fail to meet the societal expectation for cooperative venture --- a situation that may preclude effective career preparation.

## Deficient Self-Esteem

Another cause that is closely related to social skill deficiency is a sense of deflated self-esteem. Cited as a primary cause of academic failure by Kershner in a 1990 study, this single deficiency is believed to underlie the occurrences of underachievement in all categories --- thereby offering credence to the "specificity concept." In still another incident, low self-esteem was connected with the "at-risk" student profile. The Moreland School District in San Jose, California found low self-esteem to be the culprit in the district's rapidly deteriorating educational system. Among the results of the deficiency were low academic achievement, conduct problems, and low motivation, and the inability to participate in cooperative venture (Weisman, 1991).

In an attempt to determine the cause of high school dropout, Romanik and Blazer (1990) studied school data for 447 "at-risk" students and 421 regular students. Interestingly enough, "at-risk" students appeared to have much lower self-esteem than those students who had dropped out --- causing the authors to speculate that removal from an environment in which students did not experience success contributed to enhanced self-esteem.

Canfield (1990) identified poor self-esteem as a primary cause of academic failure, absenteeism, failure to participate in extracurricular activities, failure to do homework assignments, and school dropout. Concurring, Magliocca and Robinson (1991) argue that, despite a profusion of valid literature to support the connection between "at-risk" student profiles and self-concept, "the need for combining academic progress with increasing self-confidence is often overlooked" (p.30).

## School Related Causes

Schools often fail to provide productive, relevant programs and interventions that address differentiated student needs (Strother, 1986). It is not uncommon for educators to wait until problems are at hand before applying interventions. While "after the fact" attempts at mediation may be well intentioned, maladapted behaviors which have been integrated by the child over a long period may require more stringent interventions than those which can be feasibly applied within the construct and conditions of the classroom. Given the fact that school related causes such as academic failure, absenteeism, conduct deficiencies, social skill incompetency, and teacher attitude are among the most important factors to be considered in determining "at-risk" profiles, it is critical that both parents and educators be mindful of the causes which spawn and perpetuate "at-risk" conditions for many of the nation's children --- of whom many are learning disabled.

Among the most revealing documents to impact exceptional education to date is The School Programs and School Performance of Secondary Students Classified as Learning Disabled: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (Wagner 1990). Its primary goal was to ascertain the effects of current public school policies and programs as they pertain to SLD students who spend a large portion of their educational experience within the mainstream. Findings were produced for three categories. First, within the heterogeneity of SLD students, a broad range of both abilities and disabilities exists --- a condition that is not effectively addressed within the public education format. Second, most mainstreaming involves only one academic subject area with the rest in non-academic classes. Third, SLD students tend to perform significantly below the national average G.P.A. of 2.85 for high school seniors. In combination, these factors weigh heavily in placing SLD students in the "at-risk' category.

## Academic Failure and Absenteeism

Widely documented at the highest levels of the nation, perhaps no other single report has ever had the impact as that of A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Research, 1983. Arousing a sense of public consciousness, the document clearly establishes the need for the current restructuring effort. Documenting enormously high dropout rates and the pervasiveness of skill deficiencies within the ranks of those students who finally graduate, the report has laid the foundation for school improvement and accountability. High on the list of "at-risk" indicators are the wide scale problems of academic failure and chronic absenteeism --- two major indicators on which this practicum effort will be based.

According to Tapply (1985), "two-thirds of the students who dropped out of high school could be identified as risks as early as seventh grade, p. 30." Emphasizing the high potential for dropout among children who fail academically, the author notes that absenteeism is a natural coping strategy when a child's sense of self-esteem has dropped.

Citing academic failure and deficiencies in attendance as a major contributor to ultimate high school dropout, Baker and Sansone (1990) caution the educational community not to view these conditions in isolation but rather as factors that exist within a dynamic and complex context. In a study directed toward the provision of interventions to prevent high school dropout, the authors have clearly connected these two indicators with the dropout rate.

According to Maeroff (1988), schools that are located in low socio-economic areas are often major contributors to the incidence of "at-risk" factors that ultimately increase the probability of high school dropout. Often large, impersonal, and institutional by design, public schools lack the supportive characteristics that are critical to adequately address the differentiated needs of students. Moreover, the expectation of teachers in relation to student achievement is low, little relevancy is established between classroom experience and societal activity and expectation, school personnel are frequently ill prepared to deal with the multi-problems that impact disadvantagous children, and wholesale class-cutting is rampant. In summary, the author maintains that "the public schools often represent an integration of society's most crippling diseases - indifference, injustice, and inequity" (p. 634).

### Early Identification

Perhaps one of the largest factors to impact the incidence of school dropout is the pervasive reluctance of public schools to perform early identification procedures which could ultimately target "at-risk" children at a developmentally appropriate time. Failure to initiate early identification procedures for the screening and provision of interventions for "at-risk" students has the potential to increase the incidence of student dropout (Cook, 1990).

Parents and educators alike often fail to recognize early symptoms of student unrest. As a result of failure to identify on a timely basis, the child is at higher risk for dropout. Under these conditions, academic failure and absenteeism are encouraged by allowing the child time for a chronic pattern to be established (Tapply, 1985).

## Teacher Disinterest

Apathy among teachers, according to Wehlage and Rutter (1986) and Maeroff (1988), is a school related cause associated with the ultimate incidence of high school dropout. Failing to take an interest in the differentiation among students, teachers are often oblivious of the multi-factors that impact student learning. While the authors recognize that many teachers are over burdened with large class loads, that condition fails to justify impersonal teaching and the lack of commitment to link content with real-world objectives.

In terms of the effects of teacher attitude on students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe (1991) argue that this population is highly susceptible to both peer and teacher rejection.

In keeping with the concepts of A Nation at Risk: National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983), Jackson and Hornbeck (1989) alluded to the peculiarities of the middle school construct in terms of the need to restructure. Emphasizing not only the astonishing absence of educator support but of the multi-support systems that have high potential to mediate "at-risk" factors (i.e., parents, teachers, health care providers, and social agencies). Overall, the authors suggest that the lack of support services to address the multi-problems which develop during the middle/junior high school period is a condition that actually contributes to the "at-risk" profile.

### Conduct Deficiencies

Arguing that children with SLD are major targets for classification in the "at-risk" category, Margalit and Almougy (1991) found a dominant interrelationship between school conduct, family circumstances, and hyperactivity. For example, family values and teacher attributions may have considerable impact on the internalization patterns of the child. Finding that many parents of students with SLD tend to place little emphasis on leisure activity and more on achievement, the child may feel less competent because of the over compensation. Moreover, teachers tend to convey a low expectation of students with SLD --- particularly in the areas of creativity, independence, and cognitive ability. In addition, when the learning disability was accompanied by hyperactivity, children were found to be more hostile and less social. Thus, co-mingling of the three interrelated indicators increased the "at-risk" potential for the student.

In connection with conduct orientation, Bender and Smith (1990) undertook to review 25 studies in connection with classroom behavior of students with SLD. Finding significant behavioral deficits among this population, the authors delineated a number of behaviors (i.e., hyperactivity, disruptive off-task modes, and aggression) that typify profiles of students in the "at-risk" category.

While Cornwall and Bawden (1992) conducted a study to ascertain the effects of reading disabilities on aggression, there was not sufficient evidence to establish that reading deficiencies cause aggression. However, there was evidence to suggest that aggression may be exacerbated by the reading disability because of the frustration that surfaces when students do not have the ability to successfully cope with their learning environments --- another condition that increases the potential for "at-risk" classification.

## Impact of Suspension and Expulsion

Clearly, school conduct is a major concern for the public school system. Parents and teachers within the practicum district are alarmed about the infiltration of serious offenses (i.e., fighting, drugs, and weapons). A recent publication in a local newspaper indicated that one out of every nine students registered in the district was suspended during the prior school year for a period of from one to 10 days. Hard pressed to contend with the situation, administrators have frequently employed suspension and expulsion to ameliorate anxiety oriented situations. While suspensions are normally considered "home time outs", with specific guidelines applied to the number of days involved, the effect of the intervention is virtually the same.

In a 1988 study, Rose found suspensions and expulsions to be counter productive to the student in most cases. Finding these procedures to be in conflict with the objectives of exceptional education students, the author suggests that they actually encourage disassociation from the academic and social constructs of the learning experience. The problem in many schools, the author suggests, is that administrators encourage discipline problems by failing to establish consistent discipline policies which clearly delineate the expected behaviors and commensurate consequences.

## Impact of Suspension and Expulsion

One of the most widely accepted practices within the public education arena today is the retention of students who demonstrate a lack of basic skills and/or those who have demonstrated consistent patterns of absenteeism.

## Business Connections with At-Risk Problems

The business sector has become increasingly concerned regarding the high incidence of student dropouts and its relativity to sustaining viable world markets (Justiz and Kameen, 1987). Currently, the public school system is failing to produce workers who have inculcated skills that are commensurate with the high-tech requirements of American industry. Even at the lowest entry levels, where only basic skills in comprehension and computation are required, employers frequently have to establish in-house programs to bring their employees to base level literacy. As a result of the "at-risk" position in which the nation's corporations find themselves, greater interest in the causes that create an "at-risk" profile is evidenced by the myriad of support systems that have emerged from the business sector.

Despite substantial investments by government and American corporations, "at-risk" students continue to surface in increasing numbers. Often too large to address the individual needs of students, schools find themselves hard pressed to cope with the burdens of educating a large body of students while attempting to manage the business aspects connected with operations. As a result of inadequate accountability procedures for expenditures, resource distribution often takes place on an inequitable basis (Thompson, 1986).

## Summary

During the literature review, a number of topical areas relative to factors that are indicative of "at-risk" positions among students with and without SLD were explored : the intervention of American government; investment in public education by the business sector; the procedures and policies of public education; the impact of socio/economic and cultural orientation; and family values as they relate to educational pursuit. Thus, the complexities and ramifications which surround the topic of successful school orientation and the manifestation of its counterpart, "high school dropout", are multitudinous.

In summary, the incidence of the "at-risk for dropout" student is clearly impacted by multi-factors that frequently interrelate to produce insufficiencies in the areas of academic achievement, social skills, self-esteem, attendance patterns, and conduct. As a result, the nation is currently experiencing the debilitating effects of a better than 25 percent high school dropout rate --- with occurrences in excess of 40 percent in some low socio-economic urban areas. Thus, it would appear that the Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe (1991) "contextualist model" is an appropriate vehicle within which to summarize. Alluding to the global aspects of the environment, as well as to the child's affective situation, the model accommodates the ideology that both the child's demeanor and the setting in which the child must cope are highly influential in determining reactions. Thus, throughout the review, it was apparent to the writer that all researchers supported the view that none of the currently accepted "at-risk" indicators are produced in isolation. Thus, the causes of the problems and the associated interrelationships which ultimately produce "at-risk" profiles remain highly complex.

# CHAPTER III

## Anticipated Outcomes and Evaluation Instruments

### Goals and Expectations

In accord with the precepts that underlie the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), writer expectation was predicated upon devising an interventional program which had the potential to mediate "at-risk" factors among certain seventh and eighth grade students with specific learning disabilities. The primary goal of the proposed practicum effort was to substantially increase student grades and to effect acceptable attendance records for the proposed practicum participants. The following goals and objectives were projected for this practicum.

### Behavioral Objectives

#### Objective I

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who failed the prior school year based on grades will achieve passing grades in three core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least one of the six eighth grade practicum students who failed the prior school year based on grades will achieve passing grades in three core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

Objective 2

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the six seventh grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year will achieve attendance records that conform to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines. Measurement will be effected by writer review of school attendance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the three eighth grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year will achieve attendance records that conform to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines. Measurement will be effected by writer review of school attendance records.

Objective 3

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

Objective 4

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the seven seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the four eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

Objective 5

A. At the end of the eight month project, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

B. At the end of the eight month project, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

## Measurement of Objectives

### Grade Reports

To address the first and fifth objectives, year end grade reports were referenced. This evaluation method was selected because of its direct symbolic representation of both academic achievement and the mode of conduct. By obtaining and comparing year end grades and conduct data from the grade reports for 1992 (baseline data) and 1993 (terminal data), the differential in academic performance and conduct could then be determined for each of the practicum participants.

Although the conduct data is recorded as satisfactory (S), nonsatisfactory (N), or unsatisfactory (U) respectively, a computerized program allows for the accessing of specific information relative to the specific behavior, the number of incidents, and the administering teacher/administrator.

Thus, comprehensive data are available. As a result, both parents and relevant school based personnel are privileged to the data at all times.

### Attendance Records

The second objective was addressed by a discrete review of school attendance records in order to determine the appropriateness of student attendance in relation to district level guidelines. This method of evaluation was selected because it is the most direct indicator of attendance performance. By obtaining and comparing year end attendance records for 1992 (baseline data) and 1993 (terminal data), the differential in school attendance patterns could then be determined for each of the practicum students.

### Guidance Counselor Reports

Guidance Counselor Reports of behavioral observations in interactive sessions served as the evaluation method for objectives three and four. This method of evaluation was selected because it was the only available information that provided both baseline and terminal data within the configuration of the school year. Although observations were conducted on an individual basis, all baseline observations were completed within the first month of the practicum and all terminal observations were completed within the eighth month of the practicum. Each was scheduled to approximate the relevant calendar positions within the first and eighth months. By obtaining baseline and terminal data, a differential in self-esteem-oriented behaviors could then be determined for each of the practicum students.

# CHAPTER IV

## Solution Strategy

### Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The existing problem within the practicum setting was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth grade students with SLD had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on either failing grades in two or more core subject areas or excessive absences, causing the respective students to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category. So pervasive is the high school dropout problem that Tapply (1985) admonishes middle and junior high school parents and educators to become more vigilant regarding warning signs. According to the author, the provision of structured, caring environments is essential in mediating the situation. In as much as the nature of the problem is highly complex, and interventions to rectify the situation at the practicum setting met with limited success, the writer conducted a comprehensive literature review in order to seek solution strategies that had the potential to encourage the participating students to reinvest in the totality of the learning process.

## Strategies to Discourage the Incidence of Retention, Suspension, and Expulsion

Although the practicum setting tends to be highly humanistic, the policy of retaining students for failing grades and excessive absenteeism is still in effect because of a district wide policy. In accord with the Koretz (1991) study, which found a 10 percent increase in attendance among "at-risk" students when strict attendance laws were in effect, the practicum environment extended full support to the mandated attendance policy but added reinforcing modules to provide incentives for students to remain in school. Despite that effort, far too many students with "at-risk" profiles continued to surface --- a very great number of which were students with SLD.

However, it is a widely acknowledged fact that retained students are often highly prone to behavioral problems and loss of self-esteem. Feeling short changed by being relegated to classes with younger students, and which are no longer attended by their friends, students frequently act out in inappropriate and non-productive modes. Although PL 94-142 allows for up to 10 full days of out-of-school suspension and even longer for dangerous situations, Rose (1988) questions the practice. Clearly, a preponderance of studies indicate that both school suspensions and expulsions pose severe consequences. Rose, citing Chobot and Caribaldi (1982), contends that "negative consequences of out-of-school suspensions may include loss of instructional time, isolation from peers, encouraging dropouts, decreasing parental and community support, and an increase in daytime juvenile activity" (p. 231).

In order to ascertain the impact of school suspensions and expulsions, the author conducted a survey of 371 principals over 18 states. Results of the survey suggested that a wide variety of practices were employed to accommodate individual school environments. Moreover, there was strong indication that students with handicaps were often unsure of rule expectations and of their specific consequences. In light of the data, the authors presented a three-fold strategy. First, positive discipline practices should be employed whenever practical. Second, behaviors and related consequences should be clearly delineated. Third, comprehensive teacher training in behavior management should be undertaken to provide for consistent applications.

As an alternative to the pernicious effects of retention, suspension, and expulsion, a Baltimore, Maryland junior high school implemented a multidimensional program which included token economy orientation, parent involvement, small classes, attention to student differentiation, and early release. Results of the study indicated substantial improvement in both academic and behavioral profiles which caused far fewer occasions in which discipline interventions were required for students who participated in the in-school comprehensive program. Apparently more program students entered high school where they remained longer than control students. Nonetheless, the author reported that program students were unable to sustain the profile for long periods --- a circumstance that was documented by high dropout rates during the first year of senior high school (Safer, Heaton, and Parker, 1991).

Acknowledging the gravity of the problem, the practicum state Department of Education has published a manual which addresses alternatives to suspension. A variety of strategies were presented (i.e., Saturday detentions and work details, collaboration of teachers and parents, and community based service). Clearly, the need for alternatives is widely accepted. Aspiring to the need for more global objectives within a rapidly changing economy, educators are seeking more appropriate interventional methods to obsolete policies that have long since lost relevancy.

## Restructuring Oriented Programs

Perhaps the most well known educational strategy to surface of late is that of the president's widely publicized educational plan. Addressing the nation on April 18, 1991, President Bush unveiled the America 2000 plan --- a management system that is intended to improve education for all American students. Funding an alternative school for each congressional district, the national agenda supports six goals which are backed up by implementation strategies and a comprehensive accountability package. Similar to the ideology supporting parent and community involvement at the practicum setting, partnerships between educators and business lie at its conceptual base, and an ideology supporting involvement of all vested parties is an essential construct. However, Long (1991), cautions that great care needs to be taken to ensure that "at-risk" students will ultimately benefit from its lofty objectives.

To address the situation, the Los Angeles Board of Education designed a program to identify "at-risk" students and provide individual counseling as well as a variety of educational resources to students with attendance or behavior problems. Based in 24 schools, the program was intended to establish a connection between school, home, and community. The purpose was to devise a support system that was reality based in order to encourage student continuance through graduation. An adjunct advantage to the participating schools is the fact that all data can be processed on the statewide computer system --- an option that does not exist for educators within the practicum setting (Strother, 1986).

Given the economic climate that currently pervades the nation's educational arena, Feldman (1992) contends that "these goals seem like a mockery to many American teachers striving to do the best they can for their students in schools that are overcrowded, underequipped, and, all too frequently, unsafe as well" (p.9). Citing the tragedy of underfunding as the culprit that relegates the nation's children to mediocrity, the author speaks of crisis conditions in which educators rise to the challenge of meeting childrens' multi-needs on a daily basis. Thus, it is the author's position that a financial investment in the public education system is absolutely critical to the ultimate realization of the American dream --- a free, appropriate, public education. Despite the cohesive efforts of educators, parents, and community to solve the problems that were associated with "at-risk" students within the proposed practicum setting, it was apparent that funding is an essential consideration.

Moving into the streets where poverty has set the pace for many of the nation's urban children, Bill Milliken applies "tough love" strategies in an attempt to keep "at-risk" kids in an educational mode. His New York based "Cities in Schools" program promotes a sense of self worth and value. A humanistic approach, it addresses the total needs of teenagers who have dropped out and for those who have the potential to follow. Sponsored by corporations, the schools provide career preparation opportunities, interventions, and prevention programs for teenage mothers and drug abusers. Guided by personal spiritual goals, Milliken emphasizes the need for increased awareness, communication strategies, and the development of quality relationships. While a humanistic approach is in practice within the practicum school setting, there has not been a substantial improvement in the profiles of currently "at-risk" students (Thompson, 1986).

In another move toward strategic intervention, Grannis (1991) speaks of a New York city dropout prevention program which included 13 high schools and 29 middle schools between 1985 and 1988. Encompassing a student "at-risk" population of 24,077 which was funded to the extent of 40 million dollars, the Dropout Prevention Initiative (DPI) "was meant to combine seven components of service to students: project facilitation, attendance outreach, guidance and counseling, health services, middle school/high school linkage, alternative educational programs, and increased school security in most of the high schools" (p. 144). However, many of the services were not rendered on the basis intended and the program was discontinued. Although there were some limitations on services and all students did not necessarily receive the battery, the alternative education plan addressed a wide variety of needs. Ultimately, a great deal was learned from the experience. The project laid a formidable foundation on which to launch later programs which were geared to support shorter term objectives, accountability, and total school restructuring. Thus, the DPI provided a knowledge base on which to construct future policies and procedures for alternative learning experience.

In a study to determine the effectiveness of certain interventions for "at-risk" students, Baker and Sansone (1990) examined data from interviews and school records to determine the effectiveness of a staffing committee in devising school-based interventions. The outcome suggested that alternatives for "at-risk" populations are likely to be well devised through the efforts of school-based personnel. Aside from the advantage of cost efficacy, the human resources within the school itself are inclined to have personal commitments to the local student population which lends itself to meeting the best interests of the student --- a situation that is clearly evidenced within the practicum school environment.

Alluding to the 1983 publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence), Jackson and Hornbeck (1989) suggest that the middle grades were virtually left out --- a condition that suggests pernicious effects for both the children within those levels and for the nation as a whole. Thus, the publication failed to address a large segment of the student population that is expected to fuel the nation's economy within a few years. Focusing on the need for developing high order thinking skills among adolescents, the author calls for a restructuring of

America's middle schools in order to contend with the impact of rapidly changing demographics and societal expectations in terms of the creation of relevant value systems and work oriented skills.

In a recent commentary, Greer (1991), directs attention to a large body of students who are simply moving from one grade level to another out of control. Failing to acquire skills, these students comprise a large portion of the "at-risk" population. Speaking of it as the "fast lane", the author admonishes educators to present challenging experience to students in order to gain their attention and develop a rationale for the acquisition of a sound education. As part of the overall presentation, the author supports the use of collaborative venture between special and regular education teachers. Greer's focus dictates the provision of quality interventions with value-oriented strategies that have high potential to ultimately effect student achievement. Although a number of strategies have been implemented in the practicum setting to reduce the "at-risk" factors associated with high school dropout, no substantial improvement had been realized.

In speaking to the national problem of high school dropouts, Cook (1990) refers to them as "drop offs" because they comprise a population that habitually fails to work at a level that is consistent with the American dream and generally becomes a societal responsibility. Advocating a "select and defend" approach, the author emphasizes the critical need for early identification of "at-risk" children and the application of immediate and appropriate interventions. Referring to a South Carolina high school which had the highest national dropout rate in the country during 1987-1988, Cook directs attention to the personal approach to supporting "at-risk" students which was undertaken by a committed faculty to ward off the incidence of dropout. Highly successful, Club 2000 had the lowest dropout rate in the country within a year.

## Alternative Approaches

To address the woes of the nation's public education system, numerous alternative education programs have surfaced throughout the country. Many arise from needs that are peculiar to specific school districts (i.e., teen pregnancy, substance and/or child abuse, and illiteracy). Others are more global in perspective. Arguments for and against alternative education are commonplace, and the very nature of its meaning and orientation are subjected to constant scrutiny in the ongoing struggle to provide quality education to American youth. So critical is this issue that it underlies the decision making process of the SIC at the practicum setting. Therefore the outcome of this dispute is likely to dictate the orientation of the overall educational delivery system for some time to come.

To address specific educational needs within its jurisdiction, a Missouri based alternative education program was devised under the auspices of an advisory committee which was comprised of both school based personnel and members of the community. Predicated upon the premise that "at-risk" students respond more positively to elective rather than core subject areas, the Career Exploratory Program (CEP) was designed to identify "at-risk" students according to nationally specified criteria, provide pre-vocational educational opportunities, and provide interventions that had the potential to encourage graduation.

Provided with opportunities to participate in classes with "hands-on" orientation which were selected by and were of interest to the particular student, greater relevancy of school programs to real world activity was discovered. In addition, lesson plans were designed on a competency based ideology. As a result, student success generalized to traditional classes as well. Overall, it was determined that the CEP was highly successful in preparing students not only for graduation but for assuming their rightful roles in the work place and in society in general (Dorrell, 1989). Thus, the program was considered to be a viable tool in addressing the dropout prevention goal of President Bush's national agenda.

But the actual realization of that goal, according to Woodring (1989), would be tantamount to constructing a colossal societal nightmare. Maintaining that there is no evidence which supports the view that additional years in school will produce more skills or that crime will be reduced by keeping juvenile delinquents within the walls of the public education system, the author suggests that reaching success in that area would simply be an open invitation to increased crime within schools themselves. To restructure and provide credible alternative education, Woodring believes that solution lies in environmental change. Recommending a reconstructed version of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of 1930s vintage, Woodring favors removing unsuccessful youth from present situation in which there is an acknowledged lack of success, putting them to work on behalf of national interests by day (i.e., building roads and bridges) and providing educational opportunities in evening programs.

Deborah Meier's alternative approach is deeply seeded in the provision of educational opportunity according to Barko (1991). Several components underlie this unique program: parent choice and involvement; schools with a student population of less than 500; interesting, integrated curriculum; critical thinking skill orientation; two-hour block scheduling; and exploration of the affective profile within the configuration of support groups. Humanistic in every respect, the program invites student participation and belonging. Within this forum, students are encouraged to interact with both the teacher and peers in order to broaden their horizons and develop productive thinking skills. Although some educators have espoused concerns about Meier's departure from the more traditional models, the four alternative education schools in East Harlem currently enjoy an extensive waiting list, and Meier's penchant for developing "thinking citizens" (p. 83) is widely applauded by both parents and professionals.

In connection with choice ideology, Shapiro (1991) speaks to Lamar Alexander's position which supports the view that parental choice is not only expedient but that it illustrates the best of American philosophy. Predicated upon the Bush concept which suggests that free enterprise will spark competitive interests to upgrade services and offer stimulating educational opportunities for the nation's children, the idea of choice is intended to provide a quality solution to the pervasive national problem of educational inefficacy. Nonetheless, Shapiro expresses concern that the concept may very well produce a barrage of inequities and relegate the public schools to conditions that will preclude their ability to provide relevant, quality educations to American students. According to the author, the solution lies in keeping the integrity of funding within public jurisdiction and allocating it on an equitable basis so that global improvement in the educational delivery system can be achieved. Removing resources from the system has the potential of relegating the public education to chronic mediocrity.

An aspirant of the ability of the public school systems to provide quality services to American youth, Young (1991) advocates alternative education within the public structure as a viable method of addressing the goals of student achievement and educational excellence while, at the same time, preserving equality for all.

However, certain parameters and expectations are integral to successful operations: small schools, a holistic approach, a warm, supportive environment, and the linking of educational objectives to community experience.

In reviewing the reform efforts of the past, Albert Shanker (1991) alludes to the successes and failures of the past and addresses the two basic reform movements within the nation today. The first has been evidenced over a period of time. Its orientation was clearly positioned to upgrade academic standards and improve competency. Guided by traditional concepts that protect the interests of administrators and teachers and armed with a management module which espouses top down management, the movement has produced upgraded results for 10 to 20 percent of the nation's students, according to Shanker. However, it failed to address the interests of the other 80%. Thus, a second front, which is strongly supported by the author, has surfaced.

Addressing the needs of the majority of children who have become disenchanted with education because of ineffective methods that fail to establish educational relevancy, teachers are given opportunities to design and implement alternative experiences within the collaborative efforts that underlie the teaming concept. Teacher choice is critical to the alternative concept --- as is adjunct cooperation from administrators and non-participating teachers. Although teacher assignments to the alternative program are strictly voluntary, a support structure which involves all school based personnel is essential. Based on a "school within a school" concept, Shanker maintains that this alternative approach offers the best solution to the nation's huge "at-risk" population.

While Shanker (1991) is a proponent of limited choice within the configuration of the public school system itself, Seymour Fliegel supports the concept of independent environmental choice. As an acknowledged architect of the alternative school concept, Seymour Fliegel (former deputy superintendent of New York City's 4th District) created 24 alternative education schools that aspire to an ideology which suggests that learning takes place in a wide variety of modes and that people should have a discrete educational choice. Although magnet schools present opportunities for diverse orientation and improved educational quality because of competitive forces and accountability, some argue that inequities dominate the construct. Alluding to the fact that there is some competition to gain entrance, Fliegel claims that the benefits of the alternative system far outweigh the small disadvantages (Brandt, 1991).

Aspiring to the ideals that dictate educational decency, Herbert Kohl parallels his philosophy with that of the national educational agenda. Abhorring the term "at-risk", this leading educator maintains that it has pathological implications and is racist in every respect. Though he prefers not to use the term "alternative education", Kohl's concepts and methods are clearly indicative of an alternative approach to traditional methods. Taking a jaundiced view of corporate influence within the public school system, Kohl espouses the belief that corporations do not want high skilled workers but rather workers who are satisfied to occupy low level positions at minimum or minimum wages. In responding to the issue of "at-risk" children, the celebrated educator maintains that society should address the issue of poverty --- for it is his conviction that poverty underlies the "at-risk" problem. Thus, it is the eradication of poverty, according to Kohl, that is the critical element in providing solution to the "at-risk" condition (Nathan, 1991).

Widely acknowledged that successful educational opportunity is dependent upon the total revamping of management systems, progressive educators are rapidly moving toward the integration of leadership skills and strategic planning (Manske, 1987; Benne and Tozer, 1987). To address that end, Mecca and Adams (1991) discuss the ED QUEST model. A strategic planning process, it provides for environmental scanning, trends analysis, and forecasting in order to predict future scenarios. Headed by a planning team, ED QUEST is a highly sophisticated mechanism in which futuristic techniques and divergent thinking underlie the process. Its ultimate goal is to derive and analyze strategic goals with accompanying strategies for successful integration.

So significant is the incidence of high school dropout that both educators and parents have become increasingly alarmed with the progression of time and unanswered questions. Along with the foregoing concepts and constructs, a myriad of discrete alternatives have arisen to meet the differentiated needs of "at-risk" students.

## Learning Styles

Selected on the basis of failure in two core areas and in or below the fifth stanine, ninth grade students from a New York high school were placed in an alternative program which was founded by the Dunn and Dunn learning style model and block scheduling. Exposed to a variety of learning experiences, students became the beneficiaries of collaborative teacher planning which produced strategies and interventions that were designed to address the differentiated needs of the "at-risk" population. Results were significant in the areas of academic achievement and self-esteem. Moreover, with the incorporation of learning style theory and practice came professional satisfaction for the teachers involved in the program (Perrin, 1990).

## Parent Participation

Perhaps no other single ingredient is as critical to the maximization of student potential than that of quality parent involvement. Buckner (1992) reported that, following a practicum interventional program which was designed to improve communication skills between teachers and parents in order to facilitate effective parent participation during the IEP process and to provide interactive experience within workshop settings, a substantial increase in both parent attendance and quality participation in the decision making process was realized. Thus, the author has concluded that effective parent participation is a vital link in establishing rationales for students with SLD aspire to educational objectives.

In a comparative study, Yanok and Derubertis (1989) found that parents of both regular and special education students placed considerable significance on their roles in the educational process. The results were comparable for both groups --- thereby suggesting that the issue of parent involvement is widely acknowledged and is global in perspective.

Extending the concept further, Guralnick (1991) argues that the realization of educational objectives is dependent upon the stabilizing factors that exist within the family construct --- particularly where children with disabilities are concerned. According to the author, the first line of defense lies in the reinforcement of parent-child relationships. The second concern is to strengthen family structures themselves by increasing their ability to make good, independent decisions regarding daily living. Finally, parent/school partnerships should be established which address students needs in light of family considerations --- rather than addressing them as a single entity.

### Social Skills

One of the foremost concerns of American educators is the interrelationship between social skills and the incidence of high school dropout. Widely acknowledged that deficient social skills is indicative of many "at-risk" students, it is even more abundantly documented for students with SLD. Clearly, the problem of deficient social skills is a major factor in producing a sense of helplessness in students with SLD at the practicum setting.

Upon reviewing 22 studies, comprising 572 children with SLD, on the impact of social skill training on the development of effective social behavior, McIntosh, Vaughn, and Zaragoza (1991) found that results were disappointing. No empirical evidence was derived to suggest better peer acceptance. Although positive change was documented for many students, it was not uncommon for both peers and teachers to overlook the change.

Nonetheless, the authors found value in that the results of the studies defined and designated discrete characteristics that are considered to be effective to the overall inculcation of successful social skill training (i,e,, the selection of students with deficient peer relationships, the application of a cognitive-behavioral model, and small group orientation). Thus, the authors recommend that future research should utilize these findings as a basis for enhancing upon the parameters so that the social climate is addressed in addition to particular behaviors and tasks. In as much, the authors see value in incorporating other aspects of the child's profile: academic, physical, and psychological --- a integration effort that is essential from the writer's perspective of conditions within the practicum setting.

Because peer rejection is a major "at-risk" indicator for students with SLD, Vaughn, McIntosh, and Spencer-Rowe (1991) conducted a 20 week intervention which included seven male and three female student in third grade. Using a contextualist model, the authors sought to provide strategies to encourage social skills that would ultimately encourage peer acceptance. Results of the study indicated that increases in peer acceptance were greater for males than for females, that (although insignificant) perception of peer acceptance increased, and that no significant differences were obtained between teacher and student perception rating. Speculating that longer intervention periods may have produced more definitive results, the authors challenge others to undertake research opportunities to seek alternatives to the debilitating effects of peer rejection --- a condition that, if unaltered, may have life long effects.

In another approach, Cartledge and Kleefeld (1989) designed a communication based instructional model to improve the social skills of children with handicaps. Recognizing the pervasive nature of the problem for this population, the authors devised a comprehensive program to facilitate the acquisition of appropriate social skills. Several components underlay the effort. First, specification of the discrete skills to be taught was undertaken. Second, an assessment module, which included a monitoring system, was employed to address differentiation. Third, a training delivery system was designed which incorporated rationale development, modeling, controlled practice, and maintenance and generalization procedures. Specifying certain activities and procedures, the authors suggest that the model has the potential to establish social communication skills that will ultimately enhance student relationships on a global basis --- an interesting concept in light of social skill deficiencies which existed in the practicum setting. While a district adopted learning strategies program was employed to provide social skill training, students continued to fail in generalizing discrete skill inculcation.

"The inability and sense of helplessness in many students to establish satisfying social relationships may be related to social alienation and eventual school dropout" (p. 152), according to Seidel and Vaughn (1991). Undertaking a study to determine dissimilarities between students with SLD who graduate from high school and those who drop out, the authors conducted a survey of 37 male subjects (17 of whom dropped out and 20 who remained in school). The primary indicator which was scrutinized in the study was social alienation. Results produced several interesting facts. First, student perceptions of social alienation were varied. Second, students who ultimately dropped out were found to be far more alienated than those who remained in school.

Given the results, the authors suggest that future research should focus on the development of a model which has the capacity to target SLD students who are "at-risk for dropout." Moreover, the authors expressed concern that, because exceptional education teachers are often involved in the behavior management aspects of the classroom, their interactions may actually convey attributions and expectations that facilitate eventual dropout. To mediate the situation at an appropriate level, Seidel and Vaughn recommend the incorporation of programs that have the potential to increase social skill efficacy and which provide opportunities for exposure and interaction with students from the general population.

Noting an obvious lack of ability to demonstrate cooperative skills within the classroom environment, Johnson and Johnson (1990) allude to certain pervasive student inadequacies. With the advent of group learning came the responsibility for students to adjust according to the orientation of the group and to interact efficiently. According to the authors, the elements (i.e, positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills , and group processing ) which are required to produce efficacy are learned behaviors and do not come naturally to children.

To address the situation, Johnson and Johnson recommend that teachers instruct students in interpersonal skills by developing a rationale for skill inculcation, provide practical knowledge about skill utilization, provide interesting experiences in which the skill can be mastered, develop a monitoring system for skill efficiency and frequency, and encourage students to sustain the inculcated skill behaviors. Suggesting bonus points as an incentive for students to use cooperative techniques, the authors maintain that cooperative communication (social) skills should be taught with the same emphasis and frequency as the core subjects. Given that scenario, students will become the prime beneficiaries of cooperative techniques that have the potential to enhance relationships, career opportunities, and provide an overall sense of well being.

## Self-esteem

Although the acquisition of self-confidence is an acknowledged essential in the adoption of successful learning patterns, it is often side stepped by educators who concentrate heavily on academics, according to Magliocca and Robinson (1991). As a result, many "at-risk" students continue on a destructive path without intervention until they are finally targeted as "at-risk." However, successful interventions are available. Orientations such as the

"I Can" program, which has integrated proven strategies within the framework of Mediated Teaching and Learning Strategies, a federally funded project, is providing relevant opportunities for regular education teachers to intervene on behalf of "at-risk" students. Predicated upon principles and practices from special education, the program concentrates on strategic applications to encourage children to participate through the development of certain techniques (i.e., _successful_ response patterns during reading, _successful_ response patterns to questions, the willingness to take risks during learning experiences, and the ability to participate in group oriented activity). Although the "I Can" program has been adopted at the elementary level, it holds high potential to increase self-confidence at all levels of educational pursuit

According to Weisman (1991), no other single ingredient is as important to the overall educational process as that of high self-esteem. Discussing a top-down approach to esteem enhancement, the author speaks to an approach which was used by a San Jose, California superintendent of schools. Beginning at the top, teachers were provided with opportunities to heighten their self-esteem and, in turn, encouraged the same result from students. Involving students in the decision making processes of the school, many opportunities were presented in which a strong sense of self could be realized: cooperative decision making; performance based grading patterns; and student engineered discipline policies. Following the release of a report by the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility which documented the success of the program, numerous other counties and states rushed to implement similar programs.

Based on a philosophy that suggests that substance abuse rises from the need to reach a particular area of fulfillment within the individual (i.e., the need to feel good about self or the need to feel connected with peers), a two dimensional California based alternative education program was devised for eighth and ninth grade students. Two orientations were employed. One group of students engaged in cross-age tutoring of elementary school children for four days a week. The other operated a campus store. The object was to involve students in meaningful work, giving them the opportunity to learn and employ skills which would enhance self-esteem and ultimately replace the need for artificial reinforcement. Although the program was highly rated by its participants, upon evaluation, Malvin, Moskowitz, Schaps, and Schaeffer (1985) found that the "Alternatives" program produced no significant results regarding student attitudes toward self or school.

In still another attempt to increase student self esteem, Canfield (1990) delineated a ten step procedure. Alluding to the complexities of society, the author maintains that nurturing qualities on which children depend are currently in short supply. To counter the pernicious effects of that scenario, schools have a heightened responsibility to create positive environments in which students can successfully grow and develop emotionally. Calling it a "10-step model to help students become winners in life" (p.48), Canfield outlines the following steps: children must assume 100 percent responsibility for their own learning; focus must always be on positive experience for students; convey a sense of worth to the child; use peer support groups to prevent alienation; identify student strengths; focus on the personal vision; establish goals; utilize visualization techniques to increase and sustain motivation; encourage students to take positive action; and challenge students to respond positively to feedback and sustain the desired behavior. In conclusion, the author maintains that positive outcomes are derived from continued teacher use of the program.

## Mentors

As the national interest has turned to the restructuring of public education, there is an increasing awareness that new strategies are desperately needed in order to reduce the appalling high school dropout rate. Glass (1991) speaks of the community based mentor program --- an intervention that has gained broad acceptance as the business sector and the general community has moved to address educational issues that impact society as a whole. Two such programs are the subject of the author's writing: 100 Blackmen of Atlanta and Mentors, Inc. The Atlanta organization adopted a homeroom class at Archer High School. Aside from providing consistent personal support through the provision of several mentors, presenting numerous cultural and educational experiences, the organization also offered college tuition money to students who invested themselves in college preparation activities.

In the case of Mentor, Inc., a Washington D.C. group of concerned adults who joined forces to provide support structures and opportunities for "C" students.

Its underlying concept is predicated upon the belief that average students require a "boost" in order to place themselves in a mindset that will lead to successful educational outcomes. To address this need, volunteer mentors (who contract for two-and-one-half years) are paired with students in order to establish meaningful relationships in which students will set goals that are success structured. Currently serving 350 students in ten local high schools, the program has a success rate that indicates that twice as many students who participate in the program go to college as those who do not.

### Peer Mentors

Increasing evidence has surfaced to support the ideology that peers can be extremely influential in creating a support system for one another. In a study conducted by Campbell, Brady, and Linehan (1991), substantial gains were documented for three nine year old students in the areas of capitalization rules and capitalization accuracy in connection with letter writing techniques following peer teaching. Although response generalization with regard to story writing left something to be desired, it is important to note that the orientation of the generalization response was different for students being instructed and the peer tutors. In the case of student participants, generalization was defined as "potential response." In the case of peer tutors, generalization was evaluated on the basis of the effect the instruction had on the student participant. While student participants produced mixed results, the peer tutors' skills generalized substantially. Consequently, the authors maintain that the study produced strong evidence that substantial gains can be realized in the area of written language skills for students with learning disabilities.

While Campbell et al. (1991) found significant benefits in skill acquisition for peer tutors, Beirne-Smith (1991) did not. In a study conducted to determine the effects of peer tutoring during single digit addition incuication for primary SLD students, two results were significant. First, peer tutoring was highly significant in increasing the ability of SLD students to compute single digit addition facts. Although two different orientations (sequential and random) were undertaken, there was no significant difference between the two. Second, there was significant evidence that no increase in competency took place for peer tutors. Though Campbell and

Beirne-Smith are very much in accord with regard to peer tutor efficacy for tutees, they are at odds on the subject of tutor benefits.

Obtaining similar results to those of Campbell et al. (1991), Vaughn, Lancelotta, and Minnis (1988) conducted a study to determine the effects of social skills training on a fourth-grade, white female student when given the opportunity to interact with a highly regarded peer. Based on a cognitive behavior approach, the ten week intervention consisted of the subject and her high status peer teaming with a trainer to comprise a problem solving team. Problems were generated by students in the participants' classrooms who were encouraged to place them in a shoe box. Thereafter, the trainer would read the problems to the class with both the subject and her high status peer standing along side. As time progressed, more responsibility and interaction opportunities were provided for the two participating students. Upon completion of the intervention, the two participants were reinforced by being presented with certificates and badges and were given recognition by having their pictures in the school newspaper. While a number of questions emerged as to whether males would react to the intervention in the same manner and whether or not males are as susceptible to peer alienation, the results of the study were indicative of positive peer perceptions of the subject immediately following the interventional application. Moreover, a one year follow-up determined that the behavior had been successfully sustained.

In still another orientation, Lee, Luppino, and Plionis (1990) cite a dropout prevention program in Washington, D.C. in which peer tutors are an integral part of the program. Trained in strategies to aid students in improving their status, under graduate students from Catholic University interact with students to encourage regular attendance habits, school continuance, and the development of marketable skills. To achieve this end, peer mentors and employment training were used as the primary incentives. Backed by the Marriott Corp. and numerous local businesses, students were provided with real-world opportunities to develop career skills. The duration of the program was two years. Ninety-seven students (94 black, two hispanic, and one Asian) ranging in age from 12 to 15, participated in the program. Follow-up data indicated that 10 dropped out, and 87 students participated throughout the practicum. Although truancy had been a major problem, attendance was very high for the project participants. It was concluded that the quality relationships that had been established between project participants and peer mentors were the motivating factors in keeping students in school and encouraging them to acquire career oriented skills.

Stainback, Stainback, and Wilkinson (1992) speak to the issue of peer alienation and feelings of isolation in connection with mainstreaming. In order to provide a successful transition to the regular education classroom, interpersonal strategies are required. Aside from utilizing teacher adopted techniques to deal with differentiated needs, the authors maintain that students should be taught specifics with regard to positive interaction, seeking common interests, appreciating the experiences and thoughts of others, sharing, loyalty, and conflict resolution. Above all, according to the authors, global classroom emphasis should be place on celebrating differences among students and providing support without being overbearing or intrusive.

Finally, Chrisco (1989) discusses peer assistance from a professional perspective. Over a two year period, the English department at Brattleboro Union High School in Vermont began an exploratory process that was to culminate as a peer assistance program.

A slow starting, voluntary program, it enjoyed total support of the administration. During the first year, discussions of evaluation and assistance ensued. Clearer definition of what the terminology meant to professionals in that setting was established, and a goal which was predicated upon professional growth was established.

Thus, it was determined that each teacher would observe one other teacher as well as being observed by one in a non-threatening environment. The second year brought about the opportunity for teachers to learn a word processing program, use it for inter and intra-classroom activity and instruction, and provide feedback on its effectiveness in computer output form. The result of the venture brought about integrated learning opportunities for students. The result was the documentation of three areas of success: quality communication between department members; the adoption of pre-conference, conference, and post conference methods; and mindfulness of one's own professional strategies and techniques in order to continually reassess their value and efficacy given differing circumstances.

## Career Orientation

Citing Mithaug, Martin, and Agran (1987), Rau, Spooner, and Fimian (1989) contend that most students with handicaps are traditionally unsuccessful in sustaining both jobs and relationships. Thus, a survey of 1,826 North Carolina special education teachers and administrators was conducted. Its purpose was to determine both the extent to which education skills programs should be taught and the degree of availability of such programs within the schools surveyed. Results indicated that all participants perceived the use of career oriented knowledge to be less than their personal assessment of need, males indicated that they were more inclined to address career goals than females, and most respondents reported that their schools had no coordinator for career education focus. In summary, the authors maintain that the solution to the "at-risk" indicators that plague handicapped populations is dependent upon further research in career preparation.

Scuccimarra and Speece (1990) undertook a study to determine the incidence and quality of post high school employment and of the degree of satisfaction regarding the social life of students who had graduated high school from self-contained programs. Sixty-five randomly selected students were chosen for a survey. Data were subsequently collected via personal and telephone interviews. Results indicated that 78 % were currently employed --- with the majority working on a full time basis with a pay rate of minimum wage or more. In evaluation of social perceptions, the task was more complex. Because handicapping conditions vary considerably, certain variables might have been better determined given a comparison group according to the authors. However, based on criterion that considered "positive life adjustment" (p. 218) in terms of being employed and having satisfying relationships with family and friends, sixty percent of the group qualified. In view of the multi-variables that exist for students with handicaps, the authors recommend that the solution to mediating the "at-risk" factors among this population lies in further research.

## The Role of Motivation Strategies

Perhaps the most widely acknowledged characteristic of "at-risk" students is that of lack of motivation. For whatever reason it exists, this single deficiency is an enigma that consistently challenges educators. Its lack has crippling consequences. While motivation strategies are integral to many of the foregoing solution strategies which incorporate rationale delivery, self-esteem enhancements, mentors, career incentives and the like to address individual differentiations, Rosenbaum (1989) holds quite a different perspective of its origin. Alluding to successful educational interventions that are used by the Japanese, the author suggests that lack of motivation is actually engendered in American students by current public school philosophies and practices which focus on grades as a measure of success without providing services to access jobs that are commensurate with the obtained grades.

The solution strategy, according to the author, lies in the Japanese approach. In the Japanese system, high schools form partnerships with employers for the purpose of placing students in jobs immediately following graduation. Recommendations to prospective employers are made by teachers who heavily rely on grades in making appropriate placement determinations. According to the author, students are motivated to achieve high grades because their success or failure in that regard is directly linked to real-world opportunity.

Evaluating the difference between learning and motivational problems for mildly handicapped students is essential, according to Rousseau and Poulson (1989). Presenting a model which is based on the concept that motivational problems can be rectified by identifying individual reinforcers and applying them on the basis of performance, the author delineates a three step contingency approach to determine whether the origin of the problem lies in a lack of motivation or whether it constitutes a learning problem. First, teachers establish a "work attempted" (p.18) baseline. Second, a menu of appropriate, individual reinforcers must be determined. Third, emphasis is now placed on work quality rather than work output based on the contingency reward. In the event that the quality is not improved, it can be assumed to be a learning problem. On the contrary, if it is improved, motivational problems can be assumed. Thus, the model has potential for effective screening.

### District Adopted Programs

In addition to solution based strategies which were presented in the literature, the practicum setting district has adopted numerous programs which are calculated to decrease parent apathy, facilitate home learning, integrate community involvement in school oriented venture, and provide interesting school-based work for parents which is commensurate with both their interest and ability levels. Replete with strategies to realize these objectives, the information is incorporated in a handbook that is available to all. During the research phase of the practicum, three district level programs with differing orientations were reviewed and considered: a career development project; a mentor/social skills program; and a community based project.

### School A

A three year project, funded by a private grant, this dropout prevention program is based at a local high school with similar socio-economic and demographic considerations as those of the proposed practicum school. Addressing the needs of 16 students who were originally targeted as "at-risk for dropout" at the beginning of tenth grade, the career development program is geared to encourage students to maintain high school status in order to acquire marketable skills, graduate, and assume positions in the workplace that are commensurate with both their skill and interest levels.

Comprised of three components, the program requires students to participate in activities for two 50 minute periods per day in addition to periodic block scheduling that allows for field trips. The first component is addressed within one of the daily 50 minute periods. The module was primarily designed to provide rationales for skill inculcation, to engage students in problem solving techniques, and to provide frequent opportunities for students to interact with guest speakers from the business sector. The second component addresses the individual vocational interests of the student. Individual education plans have been devised for each participant in the area of choice. Each student has a volunteer career mentor from the business community who monitors student progress on a weekly basis. The third component consists of "career shadowing" which is accomplished during pre-scheduled blocks --- generally half or whole days on a once-a-month basis.

Students are provided with tools and materials that parallel those which are currently used in their chosen career field. After two years of implementation, derived data indicate that 12 of the original 16 have remained in school. While nine of the 12 have been twice promoted, two were retained at the tenth grade level and one was retained at eleventh grade. All nine are actively involved in career pursuit and maintain at least average grades in low phase classes with acceptable attendance records. Of the three retainees, the two tenth graders have attendance problems that continue to hamper skill acquisition, while the eleventh grade retainee is currently failing in all areas because of chronic absenteeism. Although project administrators continue to express enthusiasm for the program, concern is mounting that the grant may not be renewed in light of severe budgetary constraints.

### School B

Another program that is geared to identify "at-risk" youth and provide interventions to discourage dropout is currently in place at a local junior high school. Identifying "at-risk" students in the seventh and eighth grades, the program is comprised of three components: educational counseling; parent involvement; and career preparation. Intermodular in the respect that all three are addressed within the same daily, two-hour block period, the program is administered by a teaching team.

The first half hour is devoted to educational counseling wherein the two participating teachers and a guidance counselor alternate individual counseling sessions with the provision of programs which have been designed to motivate students toward defining and setting goals. The next hour engages students in activities which involve the participating parents. Parents and students works together in groups to solve problems (i.e., student curfews, family responsibilities, and educational objectives). The last half hour involves students in career preparation activities which include guest speakers from the business sector. Although administrators of this school funded program are optimistic about its eventual outcome, there are no available data relative to the one year old project at this time. Furthermore, future budget allocations will be the determining factor in program continuance.

### School C

The third program for "at-risk" youth is also located at a junior high school within the district. Its orientation is toward connecting the educational format with real world objectives through a Mentor Program. Importing volunteer mentors from the business and general community, the one year program is intended to provide students with a trained, caring, individual mentor who will facilitate the transition from student apathy to educational re-engagement. The twice-a-week, two hour block allows for mentors and students to engage in off campus activity (i.e., to a local business, out to lunch, or to visit a local vocational facility). Of two year duration, this school and community funded program has enjoyed wide community support. Data suggest that 71 % of the selected students finished the program. Of those who finished, 62 % are demonstrating the ability to cope with their continuing educational responsibilities at an acceptable level (i.e., appropriate attendance, passing grades in all subject areas, and no serious rule infractions). Program continuance is anticipated.

## Summary of Literature Based and Field Based Solutions

### Miscellaneous Alternative Strategies

In response to the pervasiveness of the "at-risk" factor that currently plagues public education, a number of solution strategies which are relevant to the restructuring of American public schools were presented. For example, Long (1991) challenges educators to be certain that "at-risk" students are not disregarded during implementation of the national initiative. In a different vein, Thompson (1986), emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in mediating the conditions that characterize the incidence of "at-risk" students. While Feldman (1992) is in accord with the foregoing position, the author maintains that an infusion of money is equally essential to rectifying the incidence of "at-risk". On the other hand, Baker and Sansone (1990) view the solution in terms of conservation (i.e., devising school-based strategies to produce cost efficacy and relevancy to student needs). From still another perspective, Grannis (1991), Jackson and Hornbeck (1989), and Perrin (1990) each present program orientations to offset the current mindset of "at-risk" students.

While Cook (1990) views early identification to be essential to mediating the at-risk" problem, Dorrell (1989) believes that the same goal can be accomplished at the secondary level through the Career Preparation Program. Though in accord with Dorrell's concepts, Woodring (1989) favors a total environmental change which would remove "at-risk" students from mainstream education to work on community based projects (i.e., building roads and bridges) and pursing educational objectives in a night time school setting.

In keeping with policies that underlie the national agenda, Barko (1991) addresses the benefits of the Deborah Meier schools of choice in which parents have the right to remove both their children and the associated educational funding in order to enroll them in other schools of their choosing. Concurring, Brandt (1991) presents Fliegel's view that parent choice is a desirable concept that produces a wide variety of educational opportunities for children and youth. However, Shapiro (1991) expresses grave concern that, in allowing parents to choose other schools, there could be a serious depletion of funds which has high potential to relegate many schools to perpetual mediocrity and create conditions of inequity. While the foregoing authors see parent choice as the most viable approach to educational deficiency, Young (1990) and Shanker (1989) strongly support the idea of devising alternative education programs within individual public schools themselves --- a "school within a school" concept that would embrace a non-traditional approach to mediating the "at-risk" problem.

From a management point of view, Mecca and Adams (1991) maintain that the quality of the management style lies at the basis of relevant educational constructs. Therefore, it is the authors' belief that the answer to educational deficiencies is dependent on management systems. Alluding to the need to set goals and standards, the concept is based on effecting a strategic plan that will guide all personnel toward clearly designed objectives.

Finally, Nathan (1991), relative to Kohl's position, maintains that defining "at-risk" criteria, identifying students who fit the pattern, and applying interventions is not the answer at all. Rather, the author views educational deficiency as a product of societal poverty and it is clearly to that issue that resources should be directed.

## Alternatives to Suspension and Expulsion

Speaking to strategies which are geared to offset the pernicious effects of widely used suspension and expulsion policies, several were presented. Koretz (1991) advocates strict attendance policies, while Rose (1988) emphasizes the need to employ positive discipline practices which clearly delineate the consequences of actions. On the other hand, Safer et al. (1981) believe that the answer lies in programming and environmental situations (application of positive teacher expectation, student centered environments, token economies, and community involvement). Finally, state adopted programs strongly support parent/teacher collaboration and community based service programs.

Parent Involvement

Buckner (1992) and Yanok and Derubertis (1989) maintain that effective educational outcomes for "at-risk" students is positively linked to quality parent participation in their children's educational process. While Guralnick (1991) agrees that parents are critical to effecting successful outcomes, unlike Buckner and Yanok and Derubertis, the author does not place emphasis on the parent influence alone but rather on the varying influences of all family members --- each having the potential to impact the individual child or youth.

Social skills deficiencies is another issue of broad interest in connection with "at-risk" children and youth. Cartledge and Kleefeld, 1989 and Johnson and Johnson (1989/1990) presented a comprehensive instructional models to address the social deficiencies among this student population while Seidel and Vaughn, 1991 support the view that successful social skill acquisition is not only dependent upon student exposure to effective programming but also with interacting with the general population. However, in reviewing 22 studies in which social skill training was applied to "at-risk" populations, McIntosh et al. (1991) and Vaughn et al. (1991) found little to no evidence which established positive, sustained academic benefits as a result of social skills training.

In another area of widely acknowledged deficiency, self-esteem was addressed by Canfield (1990) and Magliocca and Robinson (1991) who maintain that a well devised program (i.e., the federally funded "I Can" project) which incorporates processes and strategies such as those of exceptional education is effective in mediating the "at-risk" problem. However, Malvin et al. (1985) found no significant results from self-esteem training in connection with effecting positive academic change --- despite program popularity with student participants. Finally, Weismann (1991), from quite a different perspective, maintained that esteem building should be built in at the top of an organization where it will have the capacity to trickle down to students. In a program that was devised to boost the esteem of all school based personnel, the author contends that the effect of teacher esteem has an enormous capacity to approach esteem building from quite a different approach.

In a community based approach to providing solution strategies to the "at-risk population, Glass (1991) lauded the benefits of community based volunteer mentors programs. Citing two of note, the author maintains that they represent a powerful interventional approach. On the other hand, Campbell et al., (1991) found significant positive outcomes during peer tutoring for both tutors and tutees in a study which involved language skills. Interestingly enough, Beirne-Smith (1991) produced mixed results (i.e., benefits for tutees only) from the same effort which involved single digit addition. Furthermore, Vaughn et al. (1988) produced positive results for both tutor and tutee in a social skills cognitive approach. Although, Lee et al. (1990) did not seek to establish benefits for peer mentors, the author found very positive results relative to keeping students in school when peer mentors interacted with "at-risk" students. However, it was Stainback et al. (1992) who found positive results for exceptional education students to mainstream environments when peers are taught specifics relative to sharing, conflict resolution, and positive interactions. Finally, Chrisco (1989) presented a strong case for the employment of peer assistance at the professional level. Maintaining that the effective sharing of talents and knowledge is essential to positive educational outcomes, the author presents a successful program as a solution strategy to environmental inefficacy.

Career orientation was discussed by Rau et al, 1989 and Scuccimarra and Speece, 1990. Although there has been a great deal of emphasis placed on career development, the authors are in accord that results are not definitive and more research is in order.

Addressing the motivational aspects of mediating the "at-risk" problem, Rosenbaum (1989) contends that the answer lies in the willingness of nation's public school system to adopt the Japanese philosophy which links the acquisition of grades to the acquisition of commensurate jobs. However, Rousseau and Poulson, (1989) maintain that successful intervention can be found in applying an assessment technique which is used to determine the difference between learning difficulties and the lack of motivation. Having determined the orientation, a variety of interventional strategies can be employed.

## District Based "At-Risk" Programs

Although School A presented data that suggest a high degree of success with its three component, grant funded, interventional program, there is considerable skepticism regarding its refunding. Given the extreme budget cuts that are currently impacting both the educational and social service systems, it appears unlikely that the program will be refunded at this time.

Whereas School A presented documentation to support its enthusiasm for the "at-risk" program, School B had none. Still, the program enjoys broad support within both the school and local communities, and its continuation appears to be a foregone conclusion.

School C, on the other hand, has documented a two year success track relative to specified criteria: acceptable attendance and grade profiles and no serious conduct deficiencies. Program continuance is guaranteed.

## Description of Selected Solution

A myriad of solution strategies which were designed to address the issue of "at-risk" children and youth surfaced during the literature review. Given the nature and complexity of the pernicious effects of high school dropout on both the individual student and on society itself, it is the writer's opinion that there is an incumbency on the part of educators to continue to seek viable solutions. To that end, the following orientations and strategies bore relevance to the practicum effort.

### Self-Esteem and Motivation

Underlying the ability to self-motivate is the human need to feel a sense of self-worth (self-esteem). Without it, there is no incentive to struggle (motivate). Deeply intertwined, the dynamics of these two factors hold the potential to either enhance or cripple human endeavor.

According to Weisman (1991), a critical component to the educational process is the element of self esteem. Introducing the philosophy of a California based movement which has earned broad recognition, the author contends that this single value is the most basic to all life's functioning. Concurring, Magliocca and Robinson (1991) applaud the success of Mediated Teaching and Learning Strategies, a federally funded project.

Moreover, Rousseau and Poulson (1989) note the importance of motivation to the educational process in the presentation of a program which places particular emphasis on distinguishing between learning problems and motivational problems prior to applying interventional strategies. Rosenbaum (1989), on the other hand, presented a Japanese educational concept which seeks to establish a direct relationship between school effort and real world goals in order to motivate students. Despite the different approaches, a consensus exists regarding the critical need to utilize strategies that have high potential to cause students to self motivate. Thus, the writer was convinced that self-esteem and motivation were two essential components to the practicum format.

## Social Skill Training

Although the McIntosh et al. (1991) review of 22 studies regarding the incidence and degree of peer and teacher acceptance following social skills training was disappointing, it provided foundational information for future research. Despite the limitations of the findings, a successful rate of skill acquisition was documented. Moreover, it has been the writer's experience that social skill training is essential to effective communication in interactive situations.

Therefore, social skill orientation was perceived to be invaluable to the practicum objectives.

## Peer Tutors-Mentors

The benefits of peer tutoring for student tutees were clearly established by Campbell et al. (1991), Beirne-Smith (1991), and Lee et al. (1990). Many students find it less threatening and more informative to seek and receive information from a peer than from an authority figure. Because it is not uncommon for "at-risk" students to have become alienated from authority figures, it was the writer's opinion that the peer tutoring concept held high potential for the inculcation of skills in the areas of academic achievement, communication, and socialization. In that light, it was perceived to be an essential ingredient to achieving a successful practicum outcome.

## Parent Involvement

Given the tenor of the restructuring effort which lies at the basis of the nation's educational system, parent involvement in the education of their children is believed to be critical to student success. For example, Yanok and Derubertis (1989) found that parents who participated in a study relative to parent roles in connection with their childrens' educations believed them to be highly influential in achieving successful outcomes. Buckner (1992) agrees. In addressing both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of parent participation during the IEP process, the author found that parents, who engage in activities that convey the message to their children that educational pursuit is a highly valued family construct, are far more likely to witness successful student outcomes. Therefore, parent connections to school objectives was regarded as an essential element to the practicum effort.

## Career Orientation

Rau et al. (1989) emphasized the need to engage in more research for the purpose of determining the vocational needs of handicapped students. Surveying 1,826 North Carolina educators, the authors sought data regarding the extent of vocational orientation and the quality of existing programs. Though the results were not definitive, they provided a background for further studies. Nonetheless, it is widely accepted that "at-risk" children in general and handicapped children in particular are dependent on the acquisition of basic skills that will allow them to engage in meaningful work. Therefore, career orientation was considered a vital element in addressing current goals and paving the way for the establishment of future goals for the practicum students.

Given the profusion of information which clearly establishes both the pervasiveness of the "at-risk" problem and the associated incidence of high school dropout, it was the writer's intention to create a holistically based model to provide interventions that had the potential to offset the impact of maladapted patterns among certain seventh and eighth grade students with learning disabilities who had recently been classified as "at-risk". Grounded in a pragmatic philosophy which embraces the ideology that a connection must be established between daily school experience and the ultimate acquisition of meaningful work, the writer designed a multi-component, interactive program.

Entitled "A Holistically Based Model to Mediate "At-Risk" Factors Among Seventh and Eighth Grade Students With Specific Learning Disabilities", the practicum program was comprised of interventions and activities that included social skills training, career orientation, self-esteem building, motivational techniques, peer tutor/mentors, and parent involvement. The practicum held high potential for "at-risk" students to reengage in the learning process. Although conduct deficiencies are characteristic of the "at-risk" population within the practicum setting, it was the writer's position that these deficiencies were simply a manifestation of frustration that resulted when failure was routinely experienced. In as much, it was believed that those deficiencies would abate as patterns of success were established. Therefore, it was not the intention of the practicum to treat conduct as a discrete entity.

Permission for practicum implementation, as well as full administrative support of the goals and objectives attributed to the practicum, was obtained on August 1, 1992. Moreover, full resource allocation was made with an additional provision clause which was intended to provide supplemental resources as unanticipated needs arose.

In addition to the writer, who bore total responsibility for practicum implementation, several other professionals interacted with its participants, goals and objectives, and adjunct organizational structures (i.e., SIC and Parent Advisory Committee). While the two grade level guidance counselors had occasion to interact with students and parents relative to all practicum characteristics, the "Quality Circle" acted as a monitoring body and assumed an advisory position relative to all practicum objectives and functions.

Comprised of both the primary and secondary administrators, three guidance counselors, the attendance dean, guidance clerk, two parents, and two teachers, the reorganized "Quality Circle" met informally on a request or need basis. In addition, each will assumed discrete responsibilities relative to the program. For example, grade level guidance counselors interacted with students to administer to differentiated academic and affective needs. The attendance dean monitored practicum participant attendance profiles on a daily basis, called parents to follow up, and provided the writer with timely reports. The guidance clerk scheduled testing, processed related paperwork, and provided relevant reports to the writer. All interacted with adjunct practicum personnel when appropriate (i.e., Peer tutor/mentors, parents, and career specialists). Moreover, the writer assumed a full leadership position throughout the practicum; assumed an active position on all relevant committees; generated all advisory updates to the "Quality Circle", SIC, and Parent Advisory Committees; assumed full responsibility for all scheduling; and coordinated all practicum activities.

## Report of Action Taken

The primary objective of the practicum was to mediate the "at-risk" factors that are frequently characteristic of students who ultimately drop-out of school (i.e., academic failure, chronic absenteeism, lack of self-esteem, deficient social skills, and unacceptable conduct). Therefore, the practicum practicum provided numerous interventions to aid students in developing acceptable profiles in these areas. In as much, no standardized grades were issued for student performance within the interventional programs. However, the direction and type of application within the interventional program often depended upon the information that was provided on the Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A) which were generated by both basic and exceptional education teachers.

Practicum implementation transpired over an eight month period which commenced on November 2, 1992 and terminated on July 2, 1993. For the purposes of the practicum, the 18 practicum students have been identified as Students 1 through Student 12 for seventh grade participants and Students 13 through 18 for eighth grade participants. Sixteen males and two females comprised the group.

A number of constants were put in place at the onset of the implementation period: the Parent Telephone Hotline, Student Progress Reports, Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A), comprehensive writer review of Student Tracking Reports, writer (mentor)/student conferences, parent/student/writer conferences, and Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions. All were foundational to the communication aspects of the practicum.

Parent Telephone Hotline

The hotline was intended to provide instant contact with the school environment to access current activities information, to schedule either a school based conference or a teleconference, or to speak with any person connected with the project. At the onset, three parent volunteers manned the hotline. All had been inserviced in the proper procedures during the week prior to implementation. However, within a short period, the hotline became a controversial issue because of two parent complaints that volunteers were rendering opinions and engaging in the discharge of advice relative to areas in which they had no expertise. Immediately following the complaints, the volunteers were inserviced again to delineate the nature and scope of the information delivery and to emphasize the need for discretion and confidentiality. Nonetheless the behavior continued and, after discussing the matter with parents, it was decided that the writer would assume sole responsibility for the hotline. Writer responsibility for the intervention commenced at the beginning of the sixth week of the practicum.

As a result of the unique features of voice mail, parents had the opportunity to leave messages and receive updated information regarding activities. The writer was able to access messages on a remote basis and return most calls within four school hours. In addition, all parents and students had ready access to the writer via the same method during after school hours. Although this avenue suggests a highly labor intensive mode, in actuality it was not. Parents and students called with no greater frequency than that prior to initiation of the hotline. While parents initiated few calls, all expressed satisfaction with the fact that the resource was available to them.

Therefore, the Parent Telephone Hotline continued to be a viable intervention throughout the practicum.

## Student Progress Reports

Progress reports were sent home at the end of each week to keep parents continuously informed of student status. Students bore the responsibility for having them signed and returned on the following Monday. Bonus points were issued for timely returns. The points were ultimately redeemable for items and activities that were part of a student created menu (i.e., free milk shakes, candy bars, early lunch passes, and free time). While four parents objected to the frequency of the reports and that parent signatures were expected, the remaining parents expressed appreciation for the practice. Still, many were unreliable with regard to signing and returning the forms. Of the 18 participating parents, four remained disinterested throughout the project, seven returned the forms on a fairly reliable basis, and seven returned the forms on a sporadic basis. Nonetheless, the positive feedback from the group as a whole was substantial enough to continue the practice throughout the practicum period.

## Student Tracking Reports

On a weekly basis throughout the practicum, Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A) were sent to participating teachers. The purpose was to gain information regarding each student's current status in order to provide immediate interventional services to encourage positive outcomes in all designated areas. While most teachers returned the reports on a reliable basis, three of the exceptional education teachers were erratic in that regard. Within a few weeks of practicum implementation, it became apparent that the tendency had become habitual. Therefore, the writer determined that a less formal medium was in order and relied on informal conversation to obtain updated student information. Highly satisfactory, the mode appeared to be a more comfortable medium for teachers, and it was continued throughout the practicum.

## Comprehensive Writer Review of Student Tracking Reports

Monitoring the academic, social, and behavioral profiles of the practicum students was done on a weekly basis by the writer. Weekly tracking reports, attendance records, and discipline referral records were scrutinized to determine if a need existed for interventional applications. Where necessary, expeditious interventions were instituted (i.e., parent/student/writer conference, student/mentor conference, collaborating with and providing assistance to classroom teachers, classroom modifications, and the provision of materials to address differentiated needs). Moreover, a comprehensive review was conducted on Weeks 5, 10, 14, 19, and 25. During Week 32, data collection and analysis took place. Thereafter, dissemination took place via written report to the SIC --- the school based governing body. In addition, copies of the report were prepared for review by the Quality Circle and the Parent Advisory Committee during the August meeting.

### Parent/Student/Writer Conferences

Two types of conferences were held throughout the practicum. Because it is writer's view that quality parent/student involvement is critical to successful outcomes, parent/student participation was encouraged through all phases of the practicum effort. While some parents were able to participate in school based conferences, others were not. In the case of the latter, teleconferencing was utilized both as a means of informing parents of current student status and as a conduit through which important information could be gathered from the family environment. Both types of conferences occurred whenever necessary.

## Writer/Mentor Student Conferences

Although it was originally intended that trained, county provided mentors from the business sector be included in the program, budget cuts precluded the inclusion of that component. Nonetheless, the ideological orientation was continued in the practicum project via writer assumption of the mentoring role. Therefore, writer/mentor student conferences were held on a weekly basis during planning periods or after school. The period was used to develop and maintain appropriate career goals within the interest, skill, and ability levels of the student. Further, the session provided the opportunity for students to express feelings regarding daily family or school related events. Students were encouraged to call the writer at home if a need arose. Ultimately, mutual respect was established between the student and the writer/mentor which allowed for continuous communication throughout the practicum.

## Peer Tutor/Mentor Sessions

Another mentoring approach occurred within the peer tutor/mentor sessions wherein close relationships were established between the peer tutor/mentors and the practicum students (tutees). Over time, open channels of communication were established, and tutors and tutees often conversed by telephone when a need emerged. Although the primary purpose of the program was to offer tutoring services to practicum students in the four academic areas, students often confided in the tutors regarding other matters, and it was not unusual for them to ask for advice. This intervention provided still another avenue for communication throughout the practicum.

## Weekly Workshops

Given the holistic nature of the practicum effort, three basic themes provided the foundation for the fifty-minute three-time-a-week workshops which were conducted by the writer: self-esteem/motivation building; social skill development; and career orientation. Facilitating the learning experience, the writer integrated the three themes in real-world activities for the purpose of enhancing student opportunity for skill generalization. Emphasis was placed on problem solving and collaboration. Working both individually and within group format, students were introduced to self-esteem building strategies which had the potential to translate into social skill acquisition and, finally to the application of skills within career focused goal setting. Thus, the themes were presented in three weekly workshops throughout the practicum: Self-Esteem Workshop; Social Skills Workshop; and "Choices Jr." Workshop.

## Week One

### Events and Activities

During the orientation week, all shareholders in the practicum effort were provided with a rationale for implementation of the practicum. Practicum objectives, individual and group roles, and responsibilities were discussed at length. All were encouraged to contribute to the eight month endeavor in any way possible (i.e., input, feedback, or the assumption of additional roles). It was the intention of the writer to provide and facilitate a format in which all factions could informally interconnect on a regular basis.

An evening meeting was held at which the writer addressed the SIC. Roles, responsibilities, and projected outcomes were discussed following rationale development. In as much as the SIC is the governing body for all school-based activities, the writer's presentation delineated the various practicum objectives as each related to school philosophy. Members were encouraged to take active roles in any and all project activities. Following the presentation, a brief discussion was held which high-lighted the continuing commitment of the SIC to ameliorate the plight of "at-risk" students.

The Quality Circle orientation was held following the close of a school day. Three members were unable to attend because of schedule conflicts but were updated by the writer on an individual basis within the same week. During the session, members were apprised of program objectives, roles and responsibilities were discussed, and format and scheduling considerations were weighed in light of recently adopted schedule changes. However, because the new schedule no longer provided for common planning periods, the committee determined that formal meetings were not a viable means of communication. Thus, it was decided that connections would be accomplished informally (i.e., writer or other practicum personnel making direct contact with one another). Further, it was determined that either a request by any shareholder or a pressing need would constitute sufficient reason to hold a special after-school meeting.

The parent orientation was held at an evening social during which parents had the opportunity to connect with practicum personnel and to receive information about upcoming activities which would occur over the eight month period. It was emphasized that the development of solid parent/school relationships was not only welcome but critical to the provision of positive conditions that hold high potential to foster motivation among "at-risk" students. A number of components were discussed in depth including: recognition of "at-risk" characteristics, the use of simple strategies at home to aid students toward academic and social success (i.e., creating a quiet place and setting a time for study, expecting reasonable manners in addressing family members, and the assumption of responsibility for simple home chores), and parent roles relative to overall practicum objectives and projected outcomes. In addition, parents were informed of the "Parent Telephone Hotline" from which activity information could be obtained and school-based or teleconferences could be scheduled. The session was well attended. Only two of 18 parents were absent. On the following day, non-attending parents were updated by telephone.

In as much as practicum participants commonly spend from two to four academic periods a day with an exceptional education teacher and the balance with regular teachers, teacher orientation included both factions. Because, prior to practicum implementation, the academic and behavioral status of students had normally been determined at the end of the nine week grading period, a sound rationale for the use of flexible scheduling was developed. Teachers were advised of the practical aspects of changing or modifying schedules whenever it was deemed to be in the best interest of the student. Thus, during the practicum period, schedule changes were made as a student need arose. In addition to the foregoing, both REI and the concept of inclusion were discussed at length, and teachers were provided with updated information on relevant county policies. Moreover, a time line was presented, practicum expectations were discussed, individual and group roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, and weekly "Student Status Reports" (see Appendix B) were introduced.

Objectives

1. All participating groups were apprised of the underlying goals and objectives of the program.
2. All group members demonstrated an awareness of their own roles and responsibilities as well as those of other participating members.
3. All individuals associated with the practicum made a categorical commitment to practicum objectives.
4. Parents were advised of the hours of availability and of the required procedures to access information from the Parent Telephone Hotline, request a conference, or speak with project personnel.
5. Both the SIC and members of the Parent Advisory Committee were apprised of practicum ideology and methodology.

Materials

1. Handouts.
    - A. Role definition and responsibilities of all participating members (see Appendix A).

B. Roster of participating students, respective parents, and telephone numbers (see Appendix C).

C. County provided parent handouts relative to parent involvement (see Appendix D).

D. Student Status Report (see Appendix B).

2. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

3. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

4. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

5. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

## Week Two

### Events and Activities

During practicum student orientation, which took place within a Self-Esteem Building and Motivational Workshop, students interacted with the writer in developing clear rationales for participation in the practicum description. In addition, a complete practicum description was provided, roles and responsibilities were defined, expectations were discussed, and emphasis was placed on shared decision making as it related to practicum student interaction with teachers, counselors, and peer tutor/mentors. Emphasis was placed on abilities rather than disabilities and upon disowning past failures in order to set the stage for positive growth and development. At the end of the session, participating students completed individual student profile forms to aid in peer tutor/mentor-student pairing. The format of the workshop was highly positive and supportive while upholding the pragmatic considerations that underlie the quest for educational success.

All but two practicum students (Students 3 and 7) were attentive and focused during the session. Interactive in every respect, students were largely enthusiastic about the opportunity to overcome previously failure-ridden profiles. Student contracts were introduced and rights and responsibilities were discussed in depth. Parent information letters were distributed for students to deliver. Students were requested to take contracts home and to sign and return them on the following day. All students attended.

Following the session, the writer contacted the parents of the two non-participating students and scheduled a parent/student/writer conference. Each was held separately on the following day. A procedure similar to that of the group orientation was employed

--- with the exception that each student was treated in a manner that was commensurate with individual personality characteristics as well as differentiated skills and interests. At the onset of the conference, students were given the opportunity to leave the practicum without prejudice. Ultimately, neither student accepted the option. Instead, each responded with enthusiasm.

Two days following the Self-Esteem Building and Motivational Workshop, a one hour Social Skills Workshop was held. As in the previous orientation, students interacted with the writer to develop a rationale for social skill acquisition. Guiding the process, via the theme "Social Skills for Everyday Success", the writer role modeled several skills. Cue cards describing specific social situations were used to elicit student involvement (i.e., What is an appropriate greeting to a visiting state senator?). Highly interactive, all students competed for opportunities to act out in response to the cue cards. At the conclusion, students completed activity sheets describing their "all time favorites" in a variety of situations (i.e., T.V. show, singer, actor, or dessert). The purpose of the activity was to provide an opportunity for student collaboration for the purpose of reaching a consensus as to which "favorites" should ultimately represent the group as a whole. Demonstrating enthusiasm and cooperation, all students attended the interactive session.

Although it was the original intention of the writer to obtain community based mentors for each of the practicum students, the district found itself in still another budgetary crisis. In its aftermath, mentors who had been screened and trained by a district/state compact program, for the purpose of providing services to "at-risk" students, were not as readily available as in the past. Instead, specific schools were targeted for services, and the practicum school was not in that category. In lieu of this planned component, the writer decided to provide two types of school-based mentoring opportunities --- peer tutor/mentor and writer/mentor services. In the former approach, only students who were able to attend after-school tutoring sessions had the opportunity to work with peer tutor/mentors throughout the practicum experience. In the latter approach, the writer connected with each student on a weekly basis (i.e., during planning periods and before or after school). In addition, students were able to access the writer via telephone during non-school hours.

Another departure from the original plan related to the intended role of guidance counselors. An unexpected school based budget cut caused the reassignment of both the media specialist and counselors to the In School Suspension Center. As a result, counselors were no longer available for adjunct services. In as much, it became necessary for the writer to assume the responsibility for baseline and terminal students observations. Thus, a baseline observation was completed for each practicum student during an interactive educational experience.

At the beginning of the week, the writer conducted a brief inservice for prospective peer tutor/mentors and accepted applications from the general student body. Entry level criteria for selection was predicated upon an average of B or better in one or more of the four academic subject areas, a satisfactory conduct record, the ability to remain after school for at least two days a week, teacher recommendation, and a personal interview with the writer to establish sufficient interest and motivation.

### Objectives

1. Students acquired an understanding of practicum objectives, individual responsibilities, roles,

and privileges.

2. Students demonstrated a thorough knowledge of practicum objectives, expectations, and activities during written test format.

3. Students made a commitment to practicum objectives by signing a contract stating same.

4. Prospective peer tutor/mentors were inserviced on practicum objectives as each related to the Peer Tutor/Mentor application.

5. The writer completed baseline observations for each of the practicum students.

6. Students role played appropriate social behaviors under the guidance of the writer during the Self Esteem Building Workshop.

7. Program letters were sent to parents.

Materials

1. Teacher developed test to determine student knowledge of practicum objectives, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and privileges.

2. Practicum Student Contract (see Appendix H).

3. Self-Esteem Worksheet Unit 1, I3 (see Appendix I).

4. Social Skills Worksheet 13a (see Appendix J).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Application and Schedule (see Appendix K).

6. Student Tracking Report (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Observation Checklist.

### Week Three

#### Events and Activities

After examination of entrance criteria, 25 students were accepted for training in the Peer Tutor/Mentor program --- 12 permanent tutor/mentors and 13 to provide back-up services. While there were 18 practicum students in the program, not all availed themselves of peer tutor/mentor services during the practicum experience. In as much as the program was extracurricular and most students relied on school bus transportation, four practicum students (Students 1, 6, 9, and 13) were unable to attend because of lack of transportation and three were able to attend only when parent provided transportation (Students 4, 16, and 18) was available. Thus, 11 students attended on a fairly regular schedule, three attended when convenient, and four did not attend at all. However, in cases where students were unable to remain after school, the writer provided in-class assistance by teaming the student with a compatible, skilled peer. The practice continued without incident throughout the practicum.

Although it was originally intended that a school based committee select the peer tutor/mentors, budget cuts and uncommon planning periods hampered the selection process. Moreover, budget cuts and staff reduction at the district level precluded the involvement of a resource specialist in the initial training of the tutor/mentors. As a result, the writer selected the peer tutor/mentor participants according to preestablished criteria and facilitated the training procedures. In as much as the writer's proficiency in peer tutor/mentor ideology and methodology was on a par with that of the specialist, the absence of the specialist was not a handicapping condition. Thus, in a writer conducted two-hour orientation workshop, peer tutor/mentors were trained in the proper ideology and methodology. Role play activities were employed to demonstrate discrete communication strategies. Twenty-one students were in attendance while four were absent. The absentees were later briefed by the writer at a separate after school session.

Hosting an evening session of the Social Skills Workshop under the auspices of the writer, practicum students demonstrated newly acquired social skills. Students assumed the responsibility for appropriate dress, greetings, and serving. All parents expressed interest and appreciation, and rapport was established between the attending parties. However, only 11 of the 18 participating parents and students attended. Student/Parent teams 2, 4, 6, 9, 13, 16, and 18 were absent. Four of the seven non-attending parents maintained that work schedules precluded attending evening sessions. Non-attending parents were updated by the writer via telephone, and handouts from the social were sent home.

At midweek, the writer addressed the SIC and updated members regarding current activities. An avid interest in the Peer Tutor/Mentor Program surfaced, and a lengthy discussion ensued regarding the possibility of broadening the program in the future. It was determined that, in as much as the practicum was in progress, it would be more expedient to delay further discussion until results became available.

In addition, the writer updated members of the Quality Circle regarding practicum progress. The issue of parent difficulty in attending evening meetings was discussed informally. Although a brainstorming session produced a few alternatives (i.e., keeping parents informed by teleconferencing, scheduling Saturday morning breakfast meetings, or offering an alternative evening to those whose schedules could not be accommodated at regularly scheduled meetings), it was determined that changes in schedule or format would have been premature at that time. Thus, the writer continued according to the practicum calendar.

### Objectives

1. Following a review of the applications, peer tutor/mentors were selected by the writer.

2. Peer tutors/mentors were apprised by the writer of roles and responsibilities as each exists within peer tutor/mentor configuration.

3. The Quality Circle and SIC were apprised of current practicum activities by the writer.

### Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Handouts: Students with SLD (see Appendix D).

3. Refreshments for social.

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

## Week Four

### Events and Activities

During the fourth week of the practicum, a two hour evening workshop was held to provide parents with information concerning Parent Telephone Hotline guidelines and with a comprehensive knowledge base relative to parent involvement in student education. Parents were presented with a menu containing a variety of school functions, activities, and jobs (i.e., classroom aide, office assistant, club co-sponsor, sports co-sponsor, or committee member). To the extent possible, each was asked to choose one or more of particular interest. All five of the attending parents chose at least one item from the menu.

Although invitations had been sent two weeks in advance and follow-up calls were made to confirm, only five parents attended (three seventh and two eighth). However, information pertaining to the workshop was sent home, and non-attending parents were contacted by the writer on the following day. In all cases, work and family related problems were cited as a major problem in attending evening sessions. As a result, the issue was re-examined by the Quality Circle. After a review of parent comments and much discussion relative to after-school and Saturday morning sessions, these alternatives were discounted because of the potentiality to interfere with family and work related responsibilities. Therefore, it was determined that parent/school communications be conducted via individual school based conferences, teleconferencing, and printed materials.

Practicum students participated in a one hour Social Skills Workshop in which social emphasis was placed on school functions (i.e., concerts, athletics, or dances). Fifteen students attended. Students were expected to view school in a social context. Role modeling, participative interaction, role playing, and activity sheets aided in creating appropriate student perspective. Three students were absent (Students 4, 8, and 16). Each completed activity sheets and was briefed on the following day by an attending student.

In after school sessions on Monday and Tuesday, a one hour training session for peer tutor/mentors was conducted by the writer. Role modeling and role playing highlighted both sessions. Procedures were discussed and tutor/mentors were assigned to particular practicum students based on orientation and expertise.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was mailed to participating parents.

### Objectives

1. Parents were provided with a knowledge base regarding practicum objectives relative to student deficiencies, the importance of parent roles to educational outcomes for their children, and the need to become involved in a school based project of interest.

2. Students were provided with the opportunity to discover the value of presenting one's self in a positive light after observing writer role modeling of positive self-presentation techniques.

3. Peer tutor/mentors were trained in appropriate techniques that held the potential to enhance practicum student learning.

4. The Quality Circle was updated on current activities and issues.

5. The monthly newsletter was mailed.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Handouts: Parent Involvement (see Appendix D).

3. Social Skills Worksheet 15a (see Appendix J).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Newsletter and postage.

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

### Week Five

#### Events and Activities

A writer conducted workshop was held to provide specific information and activities to aid students in organizational development. Personal habits, environmental conditions, and student attitude were explored in depth. Role modeling and role playing marked the activity base for the session. Although it was originally intended that parents participate, the experience was limited to student participation because of parent inability to attend during work hours. With the exception of Student 5, all students participated in a cooperative manner. However, Student 5 was upset about an argument with another student during lunch and refused to participate on that basis. Shortly thereafter, the student was referred to a counselor for appropriate intervention. At the end of the school day, Student 5 approached the writer to make up the activity schedule. Thus, all students were ultimately involved in the workshop.

In addition, the one hour weekly Self-Esteem Workshop was facilitated by the writer. Students 4 and 13 were absent. Emphasis was placed on abilities rather than disabilities and students participated in an interactive session in which brainstorming activities were utilized to highlight individual abilities. Interest Inventory Activity Sheets were used to enable students to define and record specific areas of interest and ability. Aside from the absence of two students, all were highly cooperative and participative. Although Student 4 completed the assignment on the following day, Student 13 refused to do so --- an incident which characterized the first formidable departure within the highly cooperative group. An immediate parent/student/writer conference was held to further delineate program expectations and provide positive support for the student. Following the conference, Student 13 completed the assignment.

Emphasis on appropriate social posture as it relates to a variety of school functions was continued in the Social Skills Workshop. Role playing and positive feedback were used to provide further definition to social presence. Students collaborated to produce a profile of social acceptability in a variety of school related circumstances. Students 9 and 13 were absent. Both made up the assignments within the week. However, Student 13 complied only after a student/mentor conference session during which the student was encouraged to take an active interest in the program.

Peer Tutor/Mentor training sessions were conducted by the writer in accord with the prior week activities.

While a comprehensive review of practicum student progress was to have been completed by the Quality

Circle, members were unable to convene at a common time. Thus, the periodic review was undertaken by the writer. Following a comprehensive writer review of Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A), Quality Circle members were apprised of student status, current events, and trends. Because Students 6, 9, and 13 were each currently failing one academic area and each had conduct deficiencies, it was suggested that the writer conduct in-class observations to determine the most appropriate intervention. Parents were contacted and urged to provide transportation so that students could take part in after school tutoring sessions. All agreed. After completing observations, the writer suggested a number of interventional techniques (i.e., seat changes, more tactile experience, and rapport development). Although Students 9 and 13 did attend the first tutoring session and Student 13 attended the second, none of the three attended any of the sessions thereafter. Despite reminders of the benefits to students by the writer, there was no further parent attempt to either encourage student attendance or to provide the promised transportation.

### Objectives

1. Students acquired a working knowledge of "how to"

effect positive learning by adopting appropriate organizational skills.

2. Students defined specific interests and skills during the Self-Esteem Workshop.

3. Students learned to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate social behavior in terms of school activities and events.

4. Peer tutor/mentors were trained in appropriate techniques that held the potential to enhance practicum student learning.

5. The Quality Circle was apprised of current activities and events.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Workshop materials:

   A. "How to Organize Your Bedroom as a Study Center" (see Appendix D).

   B. "Organizers - The Notebook Way to Go."

3. Self-Esteem Worksheets I16 (see Appendix I).

4. Social Skills Worksheet 19 (see Appendix J).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

## Week Six

### Events and Activities

As usual, both the Self-Esteem and Social Skills workshops were held. In the former, emphasis continued to be placed on abilities and disowning past failures. A motivational film was shown, and interactive dialogue followed. In the latter, school environment as it relates to social posture was the theme for ongoing activities. All students participated in the Self-Esteem Workshop while only 16 attended the Social Skills Workshop because Students 9 and 13 had been suspended for three days for continued conduct infractions.

In addition, a workshop was conducted to introduce students to the purpose and use of "Choices Jr.", a career oriented computer program. Program specific worksheets were used to provide relevant input. An interest/ability/skill inventory was provided to each student for the purpose of defining individual characteristics. Demonstrating the use of the real-world based software, the writer continuously linked academic pursuit with career preparation. Excepting Students 9 and 13, who were absent, all demonstrated a high degree of interest.

During this week, the Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions began. Held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school, they were monitored by the writer and parent volunteers. Eleven students attended the session. Students were cooperative and events were unremarkable.

The SIC was apprised of ongoing events and issues by the writer.

### Objectives

1. Following a motivational film, students demonstrated the capacity to focus on their own individual abilities.
2. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate social behavior in terms of school activities and events.
3. Students gained career development information

during a demonstration of the "Choices Jr." career oriented software.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The writer updated the SIC on current events, issues, and activities relevant to the practicum.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. VCR and monitor.

3. Film: Jonathan Livingston Seagull (motivational).

4. Self-Esteem Worksheet I17 (see Appendix I).

5. Social Skills Worksheet I8 (see Appendix J).

6. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report Form (see Appendix G).

8. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

9. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

10. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Seven

### Events and Activities

Both the Self-Esteem and Social Skills workshops continued to bolster student emphasis on abilities and to adopt appropriate social skills within the school context respectively. During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the motivational film and accompanying activities were continued. Predicated upon a theme surrounding the holiday dance, the orientation of the Social Skills Workshop centered on student utilization of individual skills which were used to create and make decorations, sell tickets, design posters, and to adopt a set of standards for appropriate behavior at a formal dance. Highly enthusiastic, all students participated in both workshops with the exception of Student 2 who was ill during the first and Student 13 who was suspended for the second time because of serious conduct infractions during the second.

The "Choices Jr." Workshop continued to review both the purpose and use of the career oriented software. After a brief demonstration by the media specialist, students were given an opportunity to use and observe the use of the program. Using previously completed

Interest Inventories, Students 1, 8, 9, 11, 15, and 16 actively engaged in the use of the software while all others observed. Following the interactive experience, the media specialist answered questions and developed ideas. All attending students were highly participative. Students 6 and 13 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer and parent volunteers, the session was unremarkable. Nine students attended. Two back-up peer student/mentors were employed because of absences among the first string recruits. Both practicum students adapted well to the new tutors. All were cooperative.

At an evening session, the Parent Advisory Committee was updated by the writer relative to project goals, objectives, expectations, role and responsibility definitions, project activity description, and current status of participating students. A question/answer session followed. In addition, members of the Quality Circle were updated. Both events were unremarkable.

### Objectives

1. Following a motivational film, students demonstrated the capacity to focus on their own

individual abilities.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate social behavior in terms of school activities and events.

3. Students gained career development information by reviewing individual Interest Inventories and interacting with or observing during a "Choices Jr."software demonstration.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. During a writer delivered presentation, the Parent Advisory Committee was given the opportunity to gain a clear perspective of project goals, expectations, roles, and responsibilities, activities, and current student status.

6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. VCR and monitor.

3. Film: Jonathan Livingston Seagull (motivational).
4. Self-Esteem Worksheet I30 (see Appendix I).
5. Social Skills Worksheet 64 (see Appendix J).
6. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).
7. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix K).
8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).
10. Quality Circle Status Report Form (see Appendix F).
11. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix N).

### Week Eight

#### Events and Activities

Continuing emphasis on individual abilities as they relate to real-world experience during the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer began to integrate the career orientation unit. Students engaged in a cooperative learning project wherein brainstorming techniques were used to link motivational aspects of the film, career orientation, and real-world activity. The attending 14 students remained enthusiastic and productive throughout the session. Students 1, 6, 13, and 15 were absent.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students interacted with the writer during role play activities. Adopting appropriate social postures for a Speech and Drama Club presentation, students assumed both active and passive roles. Following the activity, a cosmetician from a local cosmetic company addressed practicum students on the subject of "High Tech in the Cosmetic Industry." Throughout the presentation, students were expected to demonstrate acceptable social skills. Of the 18 attending students, all presented excellent social skills in both active and passive modes with the exception of Student 9 who was rude to the presenter and was subsequently sent to the dean and Student 3 who put his head down during the presentation. As a result, writer/student conferences were held to encourage positive student participation. Student 9 left the conference defending his position to act in any manner he chose. Student 3 apologized and responded positively.

Further exploration of career opportunities through software related activity sheets was the focus of the "Choices Jr." Workshop. Seventeen students collaborated to discuss individual characteristics, interests, and skills in relation to specific jobs (i.e., law enforcement officer, lawyer, forest ranger, or secretary). Student 1 was absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer and parent volunteers, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to act appropriately given specific conditions during role play activities.
2. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills when interacting with a guest speaker.
3. Students demonstrated the ability to use "Choices Jr." effectively in order to derive career development information.
4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

### Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet I41 (see Appendix I).
3. Social Skills Worksheet 65 (see Appendix J).
4. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets - Interest Inventory (see Appendix M).
5. Podium and public address system.
6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).
7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Nine

### Events and Activities

Given the fact that mid-term exams and a student holiday were at hand, only two events were scheduled during this week. First, a community sponsored shopping trip to purchase gifts for a local children's home was held. Two parent volunteers provided transportation. Given a budget of five dollars, each student was expected to exhibit appropriate social skills during interaction with store personnel while purchasing a gift. Only eight students participated in the event. Student 13 was expelled for possession of a weapon. Students 6 and 9 were on suspension for conduct violations. Students 1, 4, 5, and 8 were ill, Students 2 and 3 were absent without excuse, and Student 7 was on a field trip. Parent/student/writer conferences were scheduled where necessary. However, all participating students were very enthusiastic and demonstrated outstanding social skills. Following the shopping event, presents were delivered to the Children's Home by the students. Each expressed a keen interest in revisiting.

Following the event, the writer held an in-class "Holiday Break Party" during which gifts from local business concerns were distributed. All eight participating students expressed excitement and appreciation.

The monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated excellent social skills while interacting with shopping mall and children's home personnel.

2. Students demonstrated appropriate manners and dress during both the shopping trip and the "Holiday Break Party."

3. The monthly newsletter was sent home to parents.

### Materials

1. Gifts.
2. Refreshments.
3. Party paper goods.
4. Newsletter (see Appendix C).

## Week Ten

### Events and Activities

During the tenth week, students continued to develop individual abilities in the Self-Esteem Workshop format. Following a writer presentation on positive affirmations, students generated individual lists. Activity sheets were utilized to acquire background information for each student. Writer facilitated, the session allowed for interactive communication and ideological development within group format. Of the remaining 17 student participants, 16 were in attendance. Student 9 was on suspension for conduct violations. With the exception of Student 4, all worked together efficiently. Refusing to cooperate with members of his group Student 4 continued to irritate respective members until he was ultimately excused from the exercise pending a parent/student/writer conference. On the day following the conference, Student 4 made a voluntary apology to his group. Responding positively, the group accepted the apology without note.

The Social Skills Workshop provided the opportunity for students to send thank you notes to area business concerns that provided gifts for both the Children's Home visit and for the practicum students. Following a writer demonstration, all 14 attending students completed a rough draft. Students 1, 6, and 9 were absent. However, Students 1, 3, and 7 expressed a disinterest in the exercise. Nonetheless, after rationale development during a routine mentor/student conference, each verbalized an understanding of the social responsibility.

In preparation for individual interaction with the software, career orientation was continued during the "Choices Jr." Workshop. Vocational inventories were used to stimulate student interest and draw a parallel between classroom experience and real-world job applications. All 17 students actively participated in the session.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer and parent volunteers, the session was unremarkable. Ten students attended. All were cooperative.

As part of the community service orientation, Students 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 14, and 16 participated in a week-end beach clean-up project which was chaperoned by parent and teacher volunteers. All expressed gratification after the effort. Bonus points were earned in the social studies program for participation and a brief written summary of the event. Parent/student/writer conferences were arranged, and parents were counseled regarding positive strategies that had the potential to reinforce the learning experience (i.e., the provision of a supportive, structured, responsibility oriented environment at home).

A comprehensive review of Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A), attendance records, and dean referrals was undertaken by the writer. At that time, Student 6 was failing three academic subjects and one elective. Deficiencies in two academic areas were recorded for Students 1, 2, 9, and 14. Social skill deficits were indicated for Students 1, 3, 6, and 9, and Students 1, 3, 6, 9, 14, and 17 had non-satisfactory conduct reports. Interventions were provided on a differentiated basis. For example, because Student 6 demonstrated an area of strength in one elective (wood working shop), he was given the opportunity to work in a school based grant program that was oriented toward school and community beautification. On the other hand, there was some indication that Student 9 might benefit by taping science and social studies lectures. Thus, taping capabilities were provided.

Following the review, both the SIC and Quality Circle were apprised of current student status. At the end of the 10 week period, 17 students still remained in the program --- 12 seventh grade and five eighth grade students respectively.

Objectives

1. Following a writer demonstration on constructing written positive affirmations, students wrote five which were unique to their individual characteristics.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to construct a thank you note according to defined parameters.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to produce a primary career choice and two alternatives after interacting with "Choices Jr." career related materials.

4. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer regarding student status and program efficacy following a comprehensive review of relevant student records by the writer.

5. The writer provided a written report to inform the SIC of current student status and program efficacy.

6. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

7. Students effectively participated in a beach clean up project.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet III, 11 (see Appendix I).

3. Writer designed transparencies for thank you note format.

4. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity

sheets (see Appendix M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).
6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).
8. Beach clothing and sunscreen.
9. Large plastic garbage bags and ties.
10. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).
11. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

### Week Eleven

#### Events and Activities

During Week Eleven, Student 9 was expelled for attempting to deal illegal drugs on the school campus, leaving 16 of the original 18 students remaining in the program.

Positive affirmation development was continued in the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students traded positive affirmation sheets within a group configuration. Sheets were read aloud by a "buddy" and short letters of appreciation were prepared by each student for respective buddies. Following the exercise, students responded with positive feedback. All 16 remaining students worked cooperatively within groups.

A brainstorming activity was the focus of the Social Skills Workshop. Groups competed to produce the maximum number of uses for bricks. The purpose of the exercise was to produce competitive environmental conditions under which appropriate social skills were demonstrated. Although Students 1, 4, and 8 refused to participate, all other students worked enthusiastically and effectively within group format. Apparently threatened by the competitive nature of the exercise, the three dissenting students were agreeable to producing their brainstorming ideas on the computer. Given the alternate opportunity, all three displayed the same enthusiasm and effected similar outcomes as those of students in group configuration. Fourteen students attended. Students 1 and 6 were absent.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, an input demonstration was undertaken. Following a writer demonstration, students took turns at information input on the computer. All students demonstrated enthusiasm. Although Students 2, 8, and 14 became impatient while awaiting turns, the incident was insignificant. All 16 attending students were generally efficient and cooperative.

Addressing students on the topic of "Opportunities - A Recession Proof Career Choice" during the second half of the class, a local paramedic defined and described career opportunities within the medical field. Thirteen students attended the session. Students 3, 6, and 15 were absent. All attending students actively participated in the question/answer session that followed. Speaker emphasis was placed on the direct correlation between academic pursuit and career success.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Only four students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively interact with others in group format while sharing positive affirmations.

2. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills during a guest speaker presentation and interaction.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively interact with the "Choices Jr." software.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

### Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Student affirmation sheets (student generated).

3. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets (see Appendix M).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Twelve

### Events and Activities

A student-made film, delineating specific characteristics of positive affirmations and feedback, was presented during the Self-Esteem Workshop. The film provided an opportunity for students to participate in the creation of their own learning experience. Adopting both active and passive modes, all 16 attending students participated in the activity with enthusiastic response.

Continuing to produce appropriate thank you notes to area merchants who provided student gifts, final drafts were generated following a teacher demonstration during the Social Skills Workshop. All students completed acceptable thank you notes.

No "Choices Jr." Workshop was scheduled because the equipment was reserved for another project.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

A written report relative to student status and program efficacy was prepared for the Parent Advisory Committee meeting.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to provide and gain information by constructing a film.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to complete the final draft of a thank you note after witnessing a teacher demonstration on correct procedures.

3. The writer provided a written report to update the Parent Advisory Committee on student status and program efficacy.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. "Choices Jr." hardware, software, and activity sheets (see Appendix M).

3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

6. Parent Advisory Committee Advisory Report (see Appendix N).

## Week Thirteen

### Events and Activities

Establishing academic goals was the thrust of the Self-Esteem workshop. Concentrating on short term goals, students worked individually to develop two. A brainstorming session followed during which short term goals were shared with group members. Students provided positive feedback for one another and worked efficiently within the group structure. Fourteen students participated. Students 1 and 4 were absent.

All 16 students attended the Social Skills Workshop. Students selected elementary school pen pals from a menu of individual profiles. Facilitating the session, the writer guided students in developing the concept of "Pen Pal." To further develop the idea of communicating with an unknown person, the concept of making assumptions about others was explored.

In as much as the "Choices Jr." program was still unavailable, students divided into groups for a brainstorming session. The topic of exploration was "What If I Were a -------"? Thirteen students attended, and all worked together effectively. Students 1, 4, and 8 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

During this week the writer held a meeting with peer tutor/mentors for the purpose of obtaining knowledge based feedback. Eighteen members attended.

Twelve perceived the program to be highly effective for both the tutees and for themselves. Four reported that tutees often took advantage of them to complete homework assignments. However, two of the four had recently spoken to the tutees regarding the situation and felt that the issue had been resolved. The other two decided to do the same. One tutor was of the opinion that the program was beneficial for the tutee but not for the tutor, and one had no opinion.

## Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to establish and write two academic goals.
2. Each Student selected an elementary school "Pen Pal."
3. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively interact within group format during brainstorming activities.
4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.
5. A Peer Tutor/Mentor meeting was held by the writer to obtain feedback from tutors regarding program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.
2. Self-Esteem Worksheet II-1 (see Appendix I).
3. Social Skills Worksheet I-67 (see Appendix J).
4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).
5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Fourteen

Events and Activities

Goal development continued during the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students worked in groups following a writer presentation on "how to" reach specific goals. Role modeling brainstorming strategies, the writer demonstrated the thinking process aloud. Students followed suit in interactive mode. Thirteen attended. Student 6 was on suspension for conduct violations, and Students 3 and 5 were absent. All participated effectively in the exercise.

The creation of a personal characteristics list highlighted the activity during the Social Skills

Workshop. Writer facilitated, the exercise was intended to develop a personal inventory list from which students could draw when writing to "Pen Pals." However, Students 3 and 8 had difficulty in creating a personal list. Each was paired with a compatible student and ultimately completed the assignment. Fifteen students attended. Student 6 was still on suspension.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop brainstorming activities were continued. Students chose a career title and worked toward generating the maximum number of relevant, attributable adjectives. Groups competed to produce the highest number. Winning group members earned "early lunch passes." Thirteen students attended. Student 6 remained on suspension, Student 10 was absent, and Student 4 transferred to another school within the district when his family moved.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

A comprehensive review of current student progress was completed by the writer. Despite the dynamics of ongoing interventions which were intended to maximize student potential to achieve in the areas of academics, attendance, social skills, and conduct, Student 6 continued to fail three academic subjects and one elective. Student 1 was failing two academic subjects, and Students 2, 11, and 14 were failing one each. Students 3 and 6 had unsatisfactory conduct and social skills deficiencies. Furthermore, unsatisfactory conduct was reported for Students 5, 7, 11, and 14. Interventions were applied on an individual basis. For example, behavioral contracts were entered into which allowed students to choose from an incentive menu whenever appropriate behavior was sustained for one week. In addition, conferences, the peer tutor/mentor program, and the in-class peer tutor program were ongoing interventions which were employed to bolster academic and behavioral areas. With the exception of Student 6 who chose not to sign the contract, all students responded positively to the interventional methods.

Despite numerous requests by the writer for a school based conference, Student 6's parent declined. During a teleconference, the parent maintained that the school experience had always been a negative factor for all family members. Moreover, the expectation was expressed that Student 6 would follow in the family footsteps and drop-out of school as soon as the age of

16 was attained. Verbalizing the same view during writer/student conferences and both guidance and dean interactions, Student 6 continuously alluded to "drop-out" as the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, the writer continued to communicate with both the student and with relevant teachers in order to provide services within the full scope of the practicum effort.

Following the comprehensive review, the writer submitted an updated report to the SIC regarding student status and program efficacy. Moreover, members of the Quality Circle were also apprised of current student status.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to comprehend "how to" establish specific short term goals by writing two well defined goals.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to adequately describe themselves in written language to newly adopted "Pen Pals."

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact effectively with group members during "Choices Jr." activities.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring

sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. Both the SIC and members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer in order to provide current data relative to student status and program efficacy after a comprehensive review of relevant student records.

6. The writer completed a comprehensive review of student status.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Self-Esteem Worksheet III-58 (see Appendix I).

3. Social Skills Worksheet II-14 (see Appendix J).

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

7. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

8. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

## Week Fifteen

### Events and Activities

Although a Parent/Student Workshop had been scheduled for Week Fifteen, the event was cancelled because of a change in schedule which provided for school-wide student conferences during the same week. Instead, the writer held teleconferences with parents to reinforce the importance of homework in relation to student ability to inculcate and generalize skills. Conferences were held with 11 of the 15 parents. The other four parents were unavailable by phone. Three telephones had been disconnected with no forwarding information, and one parent did not return any of four calls. Written communication followed to all parents.

Within the context of the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer demonstrated the 5WH Strategy (Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How?) as it related to goals and objectives. By asking each question in relation to pre-defined statements, students were able to establish whether the statement was complete. Fourteen students participated. Student 7 was absent. All were cooperative and effective with the exception of Student 6 who became verbally offensive when group members refused to accept the idea of dropping out of school.

as a viable educational goal. Following the incident, the writer assigned an alternate activity on the computer.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students utilized personal characteristic lists to write a paragraph which included a main idea, three detail sentences, and a summary statement. Twelve students participated. Students 5, 6, and 14 were absent. Although Students 3 and 7 had some initial difficulty in constructing detail sentences, each was successful after the writer reviewed the concept of adjectives in relation to the personal characteristic list. All students completed the task with efficiency.

Although a local florist was scheduled to conduct a flower arranging demonstration during The "Choices Jr." Workshop, the event was cancelled because of a death in the florist's family. However, materials were delivered, and instructions were provided for the writer. Thus, modeling simple flower arranging techniques, the writer guided students during the creation of their own individual flower arrangements. Career opportunities in floral design were discussed. Fifteen students attended. With the exception of Student 6, all participated effectively. Each expressed the desire to repeat the activity.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Seven students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to effectively utilize the 5WH Strategy.
2. Students demonstrated the ability to write a paragraph according to pre-defined parameters.
3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with a presenter during a floral arranging demonstration for the purpose of creating their own floral arrangement.
4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.
2. Personal Characteristics List.
3. Floral arranging materials (florist provided).
4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see

Appendix L).

5. Student Goal Sheets (see Appendix O).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

Week Sixteen

Events and Activities

Because of budget cuts which required reassignment of the social agency representative who had agreed to conduct an interactive session within the context of the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer assumed the responsibility. Students were exposed to positive feedback strategies in relation to self-esteem building. Following writer role modeling, students engaged in interactive role playing. Thirteen students and one parent attended. All were highly participative and worked efficiently with peers and adults. Students 1 and 6 were absent.

Letter writing techniques were continued within the Social Skills Workshop format. Following a writer demonstration, students constructed a rough draft of a three paragraph writing. Student progress was monitored by the both the writer and a visiting parent.

Fourteen students attended. Student 6 was absent. All were productive.

Because of a Language Arts field trip, the "Choices Jr." Workshop was cancelled. Moreover, only the Tuesday Peer Tutor/Mentor session was held for the same reason. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Nine students attended. All were cooperative.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Four students attended. All were cooperative.

Members of Quality Circle and the SIC were updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy. Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to give and accept positive feedback.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to engage in effective writing skills by generating a three paragraph rough draft according to specified criteria.

3. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

4. Members of the Quality Circle and SIC were updated by the writer regarding current student status and program efficacy.

5. The monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 1 (social agency provided).

3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

8. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

## Week Seventeen

### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer introduced problem solving strategies which were to be used in conjunction with positive feedback. Having observed the writer in a role modeling mode, one member of each group defined a school-based social problem (i.e., girl rejects boy), examined possible solutions to the problem with other members of the group, weighed the consequences of each, and chose one that best met the current need. Throughout the decision making process, supporting members of the group provided positive feedback to the problem solver. Twelve students participated with enthusiasm and efficiency. Students 1, 5, and 14 were absent. Although Student 6 had long since demonstrated behaviors that indicated disassociation from the learning process, the student was highly participative, focused, and cooperative during the exercise.

Editing and writing the final draft of the introductory "Pen Pal" letters was the thrust of the Social Skills Workshop. Armed with characteristic lists and a list of adjectives which provided description for each, students chose colored stationery constructed the final draft, and mailed the letters. All fifteen students completed the assignment. Although Student 6 complied with the general criteria, the content of the product was unacceptable. A student/writer conference produced an apathetic student response. Thus, the letter was not forwarded to the elementary school "Pen Pal." Instead, a class letter was written to the child.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students began researching current career choices. For a period of three weeks, commencing with Week 17, each student had the opportunity to use the "Choices Jr." software for one hour. Using previously constructed input lists, students entered personal data relative to discrete questions which had been generated by the software. Upon completion, a printout was generated which specified general career orientations that were compatible with the individual student's skills, interests, and abilities. Moreover, the printout contained information relative to other aspects such as: job availability in the area where the student lives; salary ranges; job description; and prerequisites for obtaining the position. Students took the printouts home to share with parents who had been encouraged by the writer to interact with the student in exploring future possibilities. All 15 students participated with a high degree of cooperation.

While one student interacted with the "Choices Jr." software, the remaining students worked in groups in a continuing exercise to role play specific job descriptions which were provided by the writer. As one student took on the career role, others became supporting players (i.e., one student became an office manager and another group member became the office workers). All students completed the input over a three week period and engaged in the role play activity. Of all practicum activities to date, this was clearly the one to which all students responded with enormous interest and concentration. Each expressed behaviors that indicated a real-world connection to the learning experience.

Although a guest speaker had been scheduled for this session, the event was postponed until the following week.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students attended. All were cooperative.

Invitations to a Parent/Student Workshop were mailed.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to use problem solving techniques in conjunction with positive feedback strategies.
2. Students demonstrated effective organizational skills by independently completing and mailing "Pen Pal" letters.
3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with the "Choices Jr." software for the purpose of obtaining relevant career opportunity information.
4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.
2. Stationery, pens, and postage.
3. Positive Feedback, Sheet 2 (social agency provided).

4. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

6. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

7. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

8. Invitations and postage.

### Week Eighteen

#### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the writer introduced and role modeled appropriate negative feedback procedures which were used in conjunction with positive feedback and problem solving techniques. Following the demonstration, students interacted within groups under the supervision of the writer and a visiting parent. Thirteen students participated. All worked enthusiastically with the exception of Student 6 who refused to work with other group members. An alternate computer activity was assigned and completed. Students 1 and 8 were absent.

The Social Skills Workshop presented another opportunity to brainstorm ideas. Students explored themes for an upcoming school dance and created a chart listing relevant tasks and responsibilities for the sponsoring group. Fourteen students attended. Student 6 was in the in-school suspension program. All participated enthusiastically.

"Choices Jr." activities continued as planned. Nothing remarkable occurred. Thirteen students participated. Students 6 and 15 were absent.

The intended guest speaker postponed for the second time.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students attended. All were cooperative.

The SIC was updated by the writer relevant to current student status and program efficacy.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate between positive and negative feedback during problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop, and organize a school dance.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with

"Choices Jr." software for the purpose of obtaining relevant career opportunity information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The SIC was updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 3 (social agency provided).

3. Negative Feedback, Sheet 1 (social agency provided.

4. Dance Planning Organizational Charts.

5. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix M).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

### Week Nineteen

#### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, students continued to improve skills which connected positive and negative feedback to real-world problem solving situations. The same format as that of the previous session prevailed. Thirteen students participated. Students 2 and 11 were absent. All worked cooperatively within groups to produce relevant outcomes. Student 6 was cooperative and productive throughout the session.

During the first half of the Social Skills Workshop, students continued to work in group format to delineate organizational requirements for the upcoming school dance. Eight students attended. All were cooperative and productive. However, during the second half of the session, an instructor from the air conditioning and refrigeration vocational department at a local community college addressed students in connection with educational requirements for job entry in that field. Although students demonstrated excellent social skills during the presentation, little interest was expressed. Because of a school sponsored field trip, Students 1, 2, 5, 8, and 10 did not participate, and Students 3 and 7 were absent.

"Choices Jr." activities continued as planned. Nothing remarkable occurred. All 15 students participated. All were cooperative and productive.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Three students attended. All were cooperative.

Following a writer-generated comprehensive review of current student status, attendance, and discipline referrals, members of the Quality Circle were updated relative to student status and program efficacy. During the review, it was determined that Student 6 continued to fail three academic areas and one elective. Two academic failure areas were recorded for Students 1 and 2, and one area of academic deficiency was reported for Students 7, 11, and 14. Social skill deficiencies were noted for Students 2, 3, and 6, and conduct deficiencies were indicated for Students 3, 5, 6, and 11.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate

between positive and negative feedback during problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop, and organize a school dance.
3. Students demonstrated effective social skills when interacting with a guest speaker.

4. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with the "Choices Jr." software for the purpose of obtaining relevant career opportunity information.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive and Negative Feedback Sheets (continued from previous workshop).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and parent chaperone list.

4. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix

M).

5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Twenty

### Events and Activities

Positive and negative feedback continued to be interlaced with problem identification and solving techniques in the Self-Esteem Workshop. Students were instructed to identify classroom problems and determine appropriate solutions (i.e., teacher blames student for actions in which the student was not involved). The focus was on appropriateness --- given current district and school guidelines. Fourteen students participated. Student 6 was absent. All remained focused and cooperative with other group members. Although closely monitored by the writer, students demonstrated significant progress in the delivery of negative feedback. However, Students 1, 3, and 11 entered a defensive mode when receiving same.

During a brief writer/student conference, rationales were developed for maintaining appropriate behavior, and each student made adequate progress during the rest of the session.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students continued to work in groups to define roles and responsibilities with regard to the upcoming school dance. A materials section was added to the chart, and students began to deal with quantity and price information as it pertained to decorations, food, and beverages. Fourteen students attended. All were highly enthusiastic and participative. Student 6 was on suspension for conduct violations.

Having completed individual interactions with the "Choices Jr." software, all students returned to the group format during the "Choices Jr." Workshop. In the first of five sessions, groups discussed the career goals of each member. Taking turns, students provided other group members with information concerning their selection. The object was to share and gain information regarding a variety of career orientations. Thirteen students attended. Students 2 and 6 were absent. Although all were participative and cooperative, Student 7 expressed displeasure with the career choice indicated on the printout. After a student conference, the writer scheduled an additional input appointment.

A Parent/Student Workshop was conducted in an evening session. Its purpose was to emphasize the connection between educational environment and real-world opportunity. A guest speaker from the business sector clearly linked current educational vocational opportunities within the practicum district with local job opportunities. Entrance criteria was defined, and an interactive discussion took place. Attending parents and students were highly interactive and participative.
All demonstrated a keen interest in vocational opportunity. Numerous, relevant handouts were provided by the guest speaker. Ten parent/student pairs and four teachers attended the session. Parent/student pairs 1,3,6,7, and 10 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Three students attended. All were cooperative.

At a presentation to both the SIC and Parent Advisory Committees, during which the writer updated both bodies relative to student status and program efficacy, feedback was sought. A question/answer session followed. In both cases, committee members were highly complimentary of the program and expressed a keen interest in final results. Continuance of the program without alteration was recommended. In the case of the SIC, a specific interest in the Peer Tutor/Mentor Program was expressed. Although two members objected to the concept of peer tutoring, based on a perspective which suggested that students should accept responsibility for their own learning without depending on adjunct resources, the ideology was not broadly shared within the group.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to differentiate between positive and negative feedback during problem solving modes.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to plan, develop, and organize a school dance.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with group members during a career orientation sharing session.

4. Students demonstrated socially appropriate interactions with parents, a guest speaker, teachers, and other students during a Parent/

Student Workshop.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

6. The SIC was updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Positive Feedback, Sheet 4 (social agency provided).

3. Negative Feedback, Sheets 2 and 3 (social agency provided.

4. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and parent chaperone list.

5. "Choices Jr." hardware and software (see Appendix M).

6. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

8. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

9. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

10. Handouts for Parent/Student Workshop (see Appendix D).

## Week Twenty-One

### Events and Activities

Quite unexpectedly, a guest speaker became available to present at the Self-Esteem Workshop. A registered nurse with a degree in psychology, whose specialty is pediatric/geriatric connections, spoke with the students about self-esteem in connection with relationships. Focusing on the benefits of intergenerational connections, the presenter emphasized the need to broaden the individual perspective of daily living by including persons of all ages among one's circle of significant people. A question/answer format was employed. Although numerous types of relationships were discussed, the most popular subject was that of grandparents. Of the 15 participating students, only two were proximate to a grandparent. Six students did not know their grandparents, and seven saw grandparents infrequently or not at all. Strategies to connect with absent grandparents were discussed. All students attended, and all participated effectively.

During the Social Skills Workshop, the writer modeled behaviors that would be considered appropriate for dance personnel (i.e., ticket salesperson, refreshment server, parent chaperone, and D.J. assistant). Role playing took place within groups. All 14 attending students were highly participative and creative during the process. Student 7 was absent.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students moved toward developing interim objectives which held high potential for goal realization. The object was for each student to enlist the aid of others in brainstorming ideas that would help in the construction of a specific objective (i.e., in order to reach the goal of entering a vocational program in graphic design, one objective might be to take a basic computer prep course). Twelve students participated. Students 5, 6, and 14 were absent.

Although an evening workshop had been planned to express appreciation for the efforts of the peer tutor/mentors, it was rescheduled as an after school event because parent response was so poor. Many of the peer tutor/mentors were involved in evening sports. Thus, a short social was held following one of the regularly scheduled tutoring sessions. Soft drinks and donuts were served. The benefits of the program were discussed on an informal basis, and all six attending peer tutor/mentors expressed enthusiasm for the program and spoke of personal satisfaction that was derived through interaction with others.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Six students attended. All were cooperative.

Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy. Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent home.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated effective social skills while interacting with a guest speaker.
2. Students demonstrated continuing proficiency in organizational planning by appropriately acting out specified roles as each pertains to the upcoming school dance.
3. Students demonstrated the ability to construct relevant objectives in connection with specified short term goals.
4. The writer held a social for peer tutor/mentors to express appreciation for their contributions

to the program.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.
6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated by the writer relative to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.
2. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and parent chaperone list.
3. Dance materials (tickets, decorations, food, monopoly money, a parent chaperone roster, and cash boxes).
4. Donuts and soft drinks.
5. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).
6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).
7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
8. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

9. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

### Week Twenty-Two

#### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, students were given 10 minutes to construct an outline on a topic of choice (i.e., sports, T.V. programs, or films) according to the 5WH method. Beginning with this session, and for two sessions thereafter, each student gave a three minute oral presentation on the topic. Students who were not involved in the presentation were expected to maintain eye contact and assume an alert posture, according to the principles of positive self presentation. Following each presentation, a two minute positive feedback session took place. Thirteen students participated in the interaction. Students 1, 3, 7, 8, and 10 presented while Students 2, 5, 11, 12, and 14, 15, 16, and 17 listened and provided feedback. Students 6 and 18 were absent.

Making final preparation for the "Spring Dance" during the Social Skills Workshop, students interacted with two visiting parents who aided with activity coordination and completion of the organizational charts. All parties were highly participative, enthusiastic, and excited about the venture. Thirteen students attended the session. Student 6 and 17 were on suspension following a lunchtime fight with one another.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students entered a phase of reevaluation. Quietly reexamining goals and objectives in relation to career choices, students were instructed to list as many feelings as possible within a 10 minute period and to write one sentence stating whether or not the career choice was still acceptable. Although 13 students attended the session, only 12 participated because Student 7 was interacting with the "Choices Jr." software to produce an alternate career choice. Students 6 and 17 were on suspension. All other students still expressed satisfaction with the original career choice.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Five students attended. All were cooperative.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated characteristics related to positive self-esteem during oral presentations.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to give

effective positive feedback to presenters during oral presentations.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to use social and organizational skills while coordinating final plans for the "Spring Dance."

4. Students demonstrated the ability to reevaluate career objectives and goals, to express feelings in relation to the overall career choice, and to determine the feasibility of the choice as it related to abilities, skills, and interests.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

### Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts and parent chaperone list.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

6. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Twenty-Three

### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, a "You Won An Award for What?" party was held. Individual Student Characteristic Lists were used to create positive, humorous, framed award certificates which were presented to each student in the practicum project by the writer. Although parents were invited, only one was able to attend. Refreshments were served and all 13 participating students expressed enjoyment. Students 6 and 15 were absent, and respective certificates were mailed home.

Previously scheduled activities for both the Social Skills and "Choices Jr." workshops were cancelled to allow students to attend the school-wide, "Career Day." program which took place over a two day period. Choosing from a comprehensive menu of career alternatives, students had the opportunity to select those which were of most interest to them. A broad slate of activities and interactions were available as a result of the business sponsored event. Students had the latitude to enter and leave programs at will. Although the writer monitored the logistical process, no other intervention was made. The event was intended to be an enjoyable experience during which students could establish a connection between the educational format and real-world activity. Other than attending a writer delivered orientation, relative to the purpose of the career event, there were no other expectations of students. All students attended the event. Even though Students 6 and 17 had earned two and three day in-school suspensions respectively, both were released to participate in "Career Day" events.

In addition, the peer tutor/mentor sessions were cancelled because many career events continued on after normal school hours and the facilities which were normally used for tutoring sessions were not available. However, in two cases, peer/tutor mentors volunteered to work via telephone to assist tutees.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to employ positive self presentation skills when interacting with others during the social event.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to gain relevant career information during the "Career Days" event.

### Materials

1. Framed award certificates.
2. Refreshments.
3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Twenty-Four

### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, oral presentations were continued. Students 2, 5, 6, 11, and 12 presented. Although Student 6, refused to comply at the onset, the student was ultimately cooperative. All 15 practicum students were in attendance.

The formal time slot for the Social Skills Workshop was changed to the evening on which the "Spring Dance" was held. With the exception of Student 6, all participated in the event. Despite the fact that discrete roles had been previously defined, in actuality, there was an interchanging of roles in response to situational events. For example, when Student 5 (the ticket agent) needed to make an emergency trip to the restroom, Student 18 (the D.J. assistant) covered the ticket receiving station. All students demonstrated outstanding social skills while hosting the event, and all expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the event.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, and using the 5WH format, students constructed written summaries relative to individual experiences during the "Career Day" event. Twelve students attended. All were cooperative and participative. Students 6, 15, and 18 were absent.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

Seeking feedback from the SIC, the writer updated the committee relative to student status and program efficacy. All feedback was extremely positive.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated characteristics related to positive self-esteem during oral presentations.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to give effective positive feedback to presenters during oral presentations.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to employ

socially appropriate skills while interacting with all parties connected with the "Spring Dance" event.

4. Students demonstrated the ability to make effective use of the 5WH method while generating a short, written summary of "Career Days" events and activities.

5. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

6. The SIC was updated and feedback was sought by the writer during a student status and program efficacy report.

### Materials

1. Overhead, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Planning Organizational Charts, parent chaperone list, school map, tickets, cash, cash box, decorations, cleaning supplies, food, and beverages.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
6. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).
7. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).

Week Twenty-Five

Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, Students 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 presented oral reports, while all others listened and provided positive feedback. All students attended the session. Although Student 6 attempted to sleep during the first two presentations and was finally sent to the in-school suspension center, all other students were highly participative and cooperative. An excellent interactive session followed these presentations. Students sought information from the presenters in an effective and relevant manner. Excepting Student 6, all attended.

In addition to wrap-up activities during the Social Skills Workshop (i.e., paying bills and returning materials to the proper parties), a full exchange of ideas was generated during a brainstorming session. Concentrating on how to make the next event even better, students cooperated to produce a list of goals for future dances. Twelve students attended the session. Student 6 was in the In-School Suspension Center, and Students 1 and 17 were absent. Although a mild argument occurred between Students 11 and 13 concerning the time frame for dances, it was quickly remedied within the group format. All attending students were highly participative and cooperative.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, students were instructed to use the 5WH method and individual lists of feelings to write a short report under the title "Why I Want to Be a -------." Only nine students participated in the event because of a social studies field trip. Students 1, 5, 8, 16, and 18 had excused absences. Student 6 was absent. Absentees did the assignment for homework. All were cooperative and participative except Student 6 who chose not to do the make-up assignment.

Peer Tutor/Mentor sessions were held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons after school. Monitored by the writer, the session was unremarkable. Eleven students attended. All were cooperative.

Seeking feedback from the Parent Advisory Committee, the writer updated members relative to student status and program efficacy. Other than complimenting program characteristics, there was no feedback. In addition, the Quality Circle was apprised of current student status following a comprehensive review of weekly reports, attendance records, and discipline referrals. In summary of the information, Student 6 was failing all subject areas, Students 1, 2, and 14 were failing two academic subjects, and Students Students 5, 7, and 11 were failing one each. Social skill deficiencies were recorded for Students 1, 3, and 6. Unsatisfactory conduct was reported for Students 1, 3, 5, 6, 11, and 14. In addition, Students 1 and 6 were failing on excessive absences. Utilizing all available resources, contracts were adjusted and interventions were applied according to individual need.

Finally, invitations were mailed for the upcoming Parent/Student Workshop.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to continue to maintain positive self-esteem during the the oral presentation experience.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to maintain a high degree of social presence while bringing "Spring Dance" activities to a successful close.

3. Students demonstrated the ability to complete a well constructed summary of the career orientation experience.

4. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

5. The Parent Advisory Committee was updated and feedback was sought by the writer during a student status and program efficacy report.

6. The Quality Circle was update relative to student status following a comprehensive review of student records by the writer.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Oral Report Forms (see Appendix P).

3. Dance Organizational Charts.

4. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).

5. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix N).

6. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix

F).

7. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

8. Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

9. Invitations, envelopes, and postage.

## Week Twenty-Six

### Events and Activities

During this week, the primary activity for the Self-Esteem Workshop was a student sponsored pizza party for a local children's home. Although it was scheduled to have been a picnic, inclement weather prevented the outdoor activity. Thirteen students participated and six parents participated. Students 6 and 16 were absent. However, Students 7 and 11 argued constantly during the trip. Despite a strong request from the parent volunteer driver, the behavior continued to be unacceptable. Upon arrival, both students were removed from the festivity and not allowed to participate.
Letters of apology were written to the parent driver. All other students were highly participative and cooperative.

During the Social Skills Workshop, students began a 250 word written exercise which was titled "How I Contributed to Making the "Spring Dance" a success. Outlines and paragraph schematics were completed during this session. However, the activity was continued as a home assignment. Parents were encouraged to interact with students for the purpose of aiding in highlighting the major contributions. With the exception of Students 6 and 16, all completed the essays within set parameters. Moreover, students expressed feelings of accomplishment and social success. All students attended the session.

Oral reports were the focus of the "Choices Jr." Workshop. Configured in four groups, students entered into a brief discussion of representative career choices and chose one presenter who gave a brief summary of job descriptions of each member. The object was to integrate the overlapping roles by interconnecting them in a real world scenario. For example, one presenter related the roles of a fireman, secretary, doctor, and air an conditioning repair person. With the exception of Student 6, all students attended. However, Students 1 and 7 were not at all cooperative within respective groups and were ultimately sent to the dean for interfering with group goals. Thus, phone conferences were held with parents of Students 1, 7, 8, and 11. Ultimately, uncooperative students wrote notes of apology to respective group members. Although the behavior of the other students was not up to par, they were reasonably participative and cooperative.

Peer tutor/mentor activities did not occur during this week because of conflicting after school sports events.

Finally, the monthly newsletter was sent to parents.

### Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to maintain high self-esteem while assuming a leadership position during the local children's home pizza party.
2. Students demonstrated effective social skills when writing an essay on the topic of the "Spring Dance."
3. Students demonstrated the ability to summarize job descriptions and to integrate the roles of each as it occurs in real-world activities.

### Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.
2. Pizza and soda.
3. Peer Tutor/Mentor Supervisory Report (see Appendix L).
4. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
5. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).
6. Newsletter (see Appendix D).

## Week Twenty-Seven

### Events and Activities

The highlight of the week was a Parent/Student Workshop. Conducted by the writer during an evening session, parents and students were apprised of current educational resources within the community, of district policy regarding vocational education, of scholarship opportunities for higher education in connection with "at risk" factors, and of the upcoming field trip to the community college vocational center. A highly interactive session, parents were extremely participative, generated numerous questions, and expressed appreciation for the practicum project.

Overall, it was a thoroughly enjoyable, productive event for all. Eleven parent/student teams attended.

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, the students listened to a motivational tape which inspired high self-esteem through positive affirmation. Upon completion of the tape, students configured in groups to practice making positive affirmations and to discuss the benefits of same. Thirteen students attended. Students 3 and 8 were absent. With the exception of Student 6, all were highly participative, cooperative, and relaxed throughout both the delivery process and the group interaction phase. However, Student 6 left the premises without permission and was sent to the in-school suspension center.

Although the thrust of the Social Skills Workshop was to prepare students to assume host/hostess positions for Awards Night, the original date was changed because of facility problems. While some students did volunteer in that capacity some weeks earlier, preparation for the role did not specifically occur within the practicum project. Thus, this session was dedicated to enhancing student opportunity during final exams by exposing them to motivational tapes for that purpose. Therefore, the format for this workshop was identical to that of the Self-Esteem Workshop. The only departure was the tape itself which was oriented toward the reduction of test anxiety by relieving stress. Excepting Student 6 who was absent, all students were participative and cooperative.

The "Choices Jr." Workshop provided the opportunity for a year end wrap-up party. Students had been polled to determine the type. Ultimately, it was decided that a film would be shown. Candy, popcorn, and soda were served. Students were very participative, cooperative, and relaxed. Twelve students attended. Students 1, 6, and 17 were absent.

The final peer tutor/mentor session was poorly attended because of a number of school sponsored field trips, award events, and performances. Although a social was originally intended to honor peer tutor/mentors, too few were able to attend to warrant a gathering. Therefore, the writer conveyed appreciation for outstanding performance and awarded community service hours to all participants. In addition, all were publicly commended via the school media system. Throughout the program, only four became disinterested. Overall, the tutors performed with dedication, empathy, reliability, and responsibility.

Having submitted a written report relative to current student status and program efficacy to the SIC, the writer sought feedback from the committee. Expressing appreciation for the holistically based practicum intervention, the committee was highly supportive of the ideology and methodology. In addition, Quality Circle members were briefed to the same extent.

## Objectives

1. Students demonstrated the ability to listen attentively to motivational tapes, to configure in groups, and to discuss the benefits of tapes in terms of self-esteem.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with others in a socially appropriate mode during a school party.

3. The writer provided valuable community resource information to parents and students in order to enhance educational opportunities for practicum students.

4. The writer expressed appreciation, awarded community service hours, and publicly commended peer tutor/mentors for outstanding service.

5. The SIC was updated and feedback was sought by the

writer during a student status and program efficacy report.

6. Members of the Quality Circle were updated relevant to student status and program efficacy.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.
2. Motivational tapes - "Think Positive" and "Stress Relief" (see Appendix Q).
3. Film - "E.T."
4. Popcorn, candy, and soda.
5. Paper goods for party.
6. Community Service Awards.
7. Handouts: Current community educational resources.
8. School Improvement Committee Status Report (see Appendix G).
9. Quality Circle Status Report (see Appendix F).
10. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
11. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Twenty-Eight

### Events and Activities

During the Self-Esteem Workshop, concentration centered on motivational tapes which were used to encourage high motivation and produce self confidence during final examinations. Students were exposed to ideology that supported positive thinking. Following the tapes, groups convened to discuss the benefits of the motivational messages. An exchange of ideas occurred within the group configuration and all attending students were mutually supportive and cooperative as a rationale was developed for approaching exams with a positive attitude. Fourteen students were in attendance. Student 18 was absent. Test taking strategies were introduced and modeled by the writer during the Social Skills Workshop. Designed to provided students with efficient techniques in choosing correct answers on objective tests, the focus was on using a three step approach to educated guessing when encountering unknown material. After the presentation, students entered into an interactive phase wherein each participated with the writer in applying the strategy. There were no absences. All students were responsive and cooperative.

During the "Choices Jr." Workshop, "Nursing as A Career Choice" was the topic presented by a guest speaker. A nursing student in her final year, the speaker delineated the criteria for entrance to the R.N. program and, using a flow-chart, outlined the various career tracks that could be accessed within the field of nursing. Particular emphasis was given to the opportunities for males within the field of nursing. An interactive session followed. There were no absences. All students were highly participative and responsive to the speaker.

Individual observations for each of the remaining 15 practicum students were completed during this week. Although guidance counselors were to have conducted the observations, their reassignment to the In-School Suspension Center precluded their participation in that regard. Therefore, the writer completed terminal observations for each of the remaining practicum students within an interactive educational environment.

Because of final exams, the Quality Circle decided that peer tutor/mentor sessions should be terminated during the prior week. Therefore, the writer continued the tutoring sessions within exam week to aid and support students during the exam period. Only three students attended.

Apprising the Parent Advisory Committee via written report, the writer presented a brief account of program components and activities. In addition, a schedule indicating when terminal data would be presented was included.

Objectives

1. Students listened attentively to motivational tapes and interacted efficiently within group configuration to provide rationales and apply benefits to the tape experience.

2. Students interacted with the writer during application of test taking strategies.

3. Students participated in after school tutoring sessions to enhance academic skill levels.

4. The Parent Advisory Committee was updated relevant to a summary of program components, activities, and the expectation of finalization of terminal data.

5. The writer completed terminal observations for each

of the practicum students within an interactive educational environment.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparency, and pens.
2. Motivational Tapes - "Think Positive" (see Appendix Q).
3. Positive Self-Presentation, Worksheet 1 (see Appendix I).
4. Parent Advisory Status Report (see Appendix N).
5. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
6. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).
7. Observation Checklist.

## Week Twenty-Nine

### Events and Activities

During the final weeks of the practicum effort, the object was to provide for effective transition for practicum participants and to aid them in maintaining newly developed career goals. While 11 of the 15 remaining practicum students attended school-based summer instruction, Students 12, 15, and 17 took part time jobs and Student 10 babysat for two younger children in the family. However, all participated in practicum activities in one degree or another for the duration of the practicum effort.

It is important to note that practicum students attended summer instruction for differing reasons. Some attended because of academic deficiencies (i.e. Fs or Ds). However, most attended because of the philosophy within the practicum setting which supports the view that uninterrupted services should be provided to students with exceptionalities to maximize the potential for maintaining academic and social skill levels. While formal school-based instruction was considered a viable educational intervention for some, it was determined that a more appropriate educational alternative for others was founded in accommodating to individual family lifestyles and differentiated student needs. Therefore, a variety of practicum based services were provided by the writer during the transitional phase of the practicum.

Various interventions were applied according to the needs and best interests of participating students.

For example, in order to provide a continuum, the writer monitored off-campus student activities. Encouragement and support for both parents and students was a key factor to maintaining the connection between educational and real-world objectives. The chosen method to accomplish the task was to provide relevant materials to student interest and need and to maintain continuous open channels of communication (i.e., school based and telephone conferences). Moreover, two career oriented field trips were planned during this period. In the aftermath of final exams and in preparation for summer school activities, the Self-Esteem Workshop focused on upcoming activities. Stress relief was the subject of the motivational tapes. Ten students attended following summer school registration. Strategies to relieve stress were discussed following the tape. Students grouped to discuss current methods of relieving stress and how the tape strategies could be incorporated into present methods. Much of the group discussion centered on the relief students felt following exams. Students 1, 2, and 6 expressed frustration and resentment with being remanded to the summer school experience by parents and teachers. On the other hand, Students 8, 11, 14, and 16 maintained that summer school presented exciting social opportunities. Students 3, 5, and 7 remained neutral. Student 18 was absent. Following the discussion, the writer guided students in physical exercises that have a tendency to relieve stress (i.e., deep breathing and progressive relaxation techniques). All attending students were highly participative and cooperative. Following the exercises, coke and potato chips were served.

While a "Pen Pal" picnic at a local park had been previously scheduled for the Social Skill Workshop, the event was cancelled because too few parents and students from participating schools expressed an interest in attending.

As a transitional intervention, student/writer conferences were held on an individual basis throughout the week to provide opportunities for students to review previously established goals in light of appropriateness. Writer facilitated, goal review and development included completing Student Schedule Request Forms for Summer School, the development of an IEP based on academic need and student interest, appraisal of past goals, the establishing of new ones in light of educational objectives for the summer, and writing simple, short terms objectives and strategies to accomplish the projected outcome. All students participated in one of two modes. Conferences for Students 1, 2, 8, 11, 12, and 14 were conducted by telephone because of transportation problems. All others were school based. With the exception of Student 6 who remained apathetic throughout the conference experience, all students were enthusiastic, cooperative, and relaxed.

Objectives

1. Students listened attentively to motivational tapes and continued to interact efficiently within group configuration to discuss the benefits of same.

2. Students actively participated in individual transitional student/writer conferences for the purpose of review and development of goals, objectives, and strategies.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Motivational tapes (see Appendix Q).

3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Thirty

### Events and Activities

At the onset of summer instruction at the practicum school, the writer worked with respective teachers and aides to provide appropriate processing and motivational materials, instructed teachers in the use of learning strategies, and offered consult assistance for the duration of the summer session. Summer teachers were thoroughly apprised of practicum objectives and the associated activities in which practicum students had participated during the regular school year. Particular emphasis was placed on the career orientation program, "Choices Jr." Workshop, during which students had gained specific, career information relative to individual abilities, skills, and interests. Moreover, for the four students who did not participate in the summer classroom experience, all practicum services continued on their behalf.

Because counselors were overwhelmed with scheduling problems which came as a result of increased student population for summer services, the writer interacted with students to set transitional academic goals and to help students relate practicum experiences to real world goals. All students participated. Individual sessions were held.

In addition to the provision of direct classroom interventions for those students whose best interests could be addressed within a formal educational setting, other practicum services remained in effect throughout the summer program. The writer continued to monitor both on and off campus activities and the individual progress of practicum students. Parents and students continued to have access to the writer by telephone. Moreover, writer provided tutoring services were available upon request, and preparation and coordination of activities for the field trip to the local junior college vocational center continued. All practicum efforts were continued in an informal, relaxed mode to accommodate to the tenor of the summer program. Classroom services were provided only when requested by summer instruction teachers, and continuous monitoring of student progress continued. This approach was adopted as a facilitative, rapport developing overture to ensure the best opportunity for students to successfully adapt to the summer environment.

Because so many teachers and parents were unavailable on a regular basis during the summer, all committee meetings were cancelled until the week prior to the onset of the next school year. Therefore, with the exception of the terminal report which was submitted in written mode, no further presentations were made to the Quality Circle, SIC, or Parent Advisory Committee.

### Objectives

1. Supplemental materials to aid students in maintaining successful patterns during summer school were provided to summer school teachers by the writer.

2. The writer inserviced summer school teachers in the use of strategies in the exceptional education classroom and provided relevant information regarding practicum objectives and previous student orientation.

3. Students participated in individual interactive sessions with the writer for the purpose of

developing transitional academic goals which would connect to real world careers.

4. The writer continued to make preparation for upcoming field trips.

5. The writer continued to monitor and interact with practicum students who did not attend summer school.

Materials

1. Overhead projector, transparencies, and pens.

2. Classroom materials (i.e., learning strategies, motivational films, etc.).

3. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).

4. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

### Week Thirty-One

Events and Activities

Activities were continued from the previous week. Summer school students attended school from 8:00 A.M. to 12:45 P.M. on Mondays through Thursdays. Weekly progress reports indicated satisfactory academic and behavioral reports. Although processes were monitored by the writer, no direct classroom intervention was necessary.

Ongoing communication and activity monitoring for the four non-attending students took place. While Student 17 had a minor misunderstanding with the manager of a fast food establishment regarding his rate of pay, the matter was amicably resolved after writer intervention which simply required an explanation of the student's handicap which led to the misunderstanding in the first place. The other three students were coping well with current responsibilities. Otherwise, nothing remarkable occurred.

### Objectives

1. Supplemental materials to aid students in maintaining successful patterns during summer school were provided to summer school teachers by the writer.

2. The writer continued to make preparation for upcoming field trips.

3. The writer continued to monitor and interact

with practicum students who did not attend summer school.

### Materials

1. Classroom materials (i.e., learning strategies, motivational films, etc.).
2. Student Tracking Reports (see Appendix A).
3. Parent Telephone Hotline Log (see Appendix E).

## Week Thirty-Two

### Events and Activities

Two field trips were scheduled within the final week. The first was a trip to a famous high-tech facility. Fourteen students and three parents attended. Student 10 was ill. Geared to provide a glimpse into the future as it related to careers in the year 2000, the event took place over a five hour period. A facility guide narrated the event and answered student questions throughout the tour. Students were provided with resource materials which mapped career opportunities with specific educational tracks. With the exception of Student 6 who refused to get out of the van when the group reached the tour area, all students displayed excellent social skills, and all were highly attentive and participative. During the first hour of the tour, a volunteer parent remained with Student 6. Thereafter, the student decided to join the tour and, although he was never very participative, he was generally cooperative.

The second field trip was attended by 13 students. Students 8 and 11 were absent. Two parent chaperones were in attendance. A long awaited trip, the students were highly enthusiastic about the tour of the local junior college vocational facility. A personable, young tour guide provided highly relevant information about job opportunities within the local area. Visiting a placement office on the campus, the guide showed students the current lists of jobs that had just come in by computer. During the tour, all students participated in hands-on experience within the many vocational classrooms. Scholarship criteria was discussed at length as well as the dual placement program which currently gives students the option of attending the vocational center during the afternoons while attending high school. Practicum students were impressed with the idea of acquiring credits which could be applied to both a high school diploma and toward college credit. Although the trip was to have occurred over a four hour period, students were so interested in the presentation that the tour extended one hour beyond the scheduled time.

During the process, a field representative from a local high-tech corporation addressed students on the subject of marketable skills as prerequisite to job acquisition. Using the topic "Education - Your Ticket to Autonomy", the presenter developed a clear rationale for obtaining a quality education. All students were very participative and interactive.

Following both trips, summer instruction teachers used writer-provided goal seeking activities to reinforce the field trip experience and establish a direct line between current educational objectives and real world career opportunities. With the exception of Student 6, all students maintained high interest throughout the follow-up activities. In addition, the writer worked with students in an informal mode to update career goals.

A classroom party was the final student-based practicum activity. Its purpose was to provide a sense of closure to the formal eight month experience and to present a rationale for continued goal direction and periodic reassessment relative to student skills, aptitudes, and interests. Although all parents and students were invited to participate, Students 10, 15, and 17 were unable to attend because of work schedules, and no parents were able to attend. Soft drinks, candy, and popcorn were the highlight, and the mood was relaxed and informal.

Finally, data collection and analysis was completed by the writer during the final week. The 1992 baseline and 1993 terminal year end grade reports were compared to determine the differential in both academic performance and conduct for each of the practicum students. In addition, attendance records were scrutinized for the purpose of determining the differential in school attendance patterns for each. Moreover, baseline (first month of practicum) and terminal (last month of practicum) behavioral observations during interactive sessions for each of the practicum students were compared to determine the differential in self-esteem-oriented behaviors.

In as much as the SIC had cancelled summer sessions, upon completion of the data analysis, a comprehensive written report was prepared by the writer and submitted for review during the next regularly scheduled meeting. Moreover, parents were apprised of current student status in all areas of practicum orientation (i.e., academic, behavioral, self-concepts, social skills, and career orientation). Both school based and telephone conference methods were employed.

Objectives

1. Students demonstrated appropriate social skills when interacting with guest speakers and tour guides during field trips.

2. Students demonstrated the ability to interact with summer teachers and the writer during goal seeking activities.

3. The writer completed practicum data collection and analysis.

4. The writer prepared a comprehensive written report which was submitted to the SIC for review at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

5. The writer provided parents with final practicum data as it related to all objectives of the practicum effort.

Materials

1. Writer-provided goal seeking activities.

2. Parent Permission Forms for student field trips.

3. Refreshments and party materials.

# CHAPTER V

## Results, Discussion and Recommendations

### Results

Given the nature, complexity, and pervasiveness of the high school drop-out situation, educators throughout the country have become more involved than ever before in the provision of interventional programs and services to mediate this national crisis. Despite some outstanding efforts, escalation continues. Although certain socio-economic dynamics appear to be characteristic of the typical "at-risk" student, the risk factor is greatly enhanced when that student also has a learning disability. By the time high school is reached, the student has all too frequently disassociated from the learning process while awaiting the opportunity to drop-out at the age of 16. Thus, it is apparent that interventional methods need to be implemented much earlier.

Ideally, identification of students with "at-risk" profiles and the employment of appropriate interventional methods should take place at the elementary level. However, as a nation with a problem that has reached epidemic proportions, a reluctance to address the tragedy on a nation-wide basis still exists. As a result, "at-risk" students often remain unidentified until strong evidence of global academic failure surfaces. More often than not, this scenario is evidenced at the middle/junior high school level.

Clearly, the "at-risk" problem was no stranger to the practicum school. It was particularly evident among students with learning disabilities. More specifically, the existing problem within the proposed practicum setting was that 12 seventh-grade and six eighth-grade students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) had failed the 1991-1992 school year based on either failing grades in two or more core subject areas or excessive absences, causing the respective students to be classified in the "at-risk for dropout" category. Despite numerous efforts to intervene, many of these students continued to demonstrate academic and social behaviors that were highly characteristic of the typical high school drop-out. As a result, sufficient evidence was present in the practicum environment to suggest that an interventional strategy was needed.

Because the writer is committed to the goals, objectives, and underlying ideology of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142), it was essential that the interventional strategy be designed to embrace the philosophy of that landmark legislation. After reviewing the literature, it was determined that a holistically based strategy would be employed to encourage students to achieve passing grades, improve school attendance, develop appropriate social and organizational skills, demonstrate responsible conduct profiles, and develop a sense of heightened self-esteem. In the best interests of students, it was determined that these specific behaviors be integrated with real-world career goals in order to aid in the development of marketable skills.

Objective I

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who failed the prior school year based on grades will achieve passing grades in three core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original 12 seventh grade practicum students, who failed the prior school year based on grades, three achieved passing grades in three or more core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education by the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least one of the six eighth grade practicum students who failed the prior school year based on grades will achieve passing grades in three core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six eighth grade practicum students who failed the prior school year based on grades, two achieved passing grades in three or more core subject areas, two elective subject areas, and physical education by the end of the eight month practicum.

### Objective 2

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the six seventh grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year will achieve attendance records that conform to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines. Measurement will be effected by writer review of school attendance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six seventh grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year, four achieved attendance records that conformed to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the three eighth grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year will achieve attendance records that conform to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines. Measurement will be effected by writer review of school attendance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original three eighth grade practicum students who qualified for failure due to absences during the prior school year, three achieved attendance records that conformed to acceptable standards according to district level guidelines at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 3

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem, four demonstrated appropriate levels of self-esteem at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem will demonstrate appropriate levels of self-esteem. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated an insufficiency in self-esteem, three demonstrated appropriate levels of self-esteem at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 4

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the seven seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture. Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original seven seventh grade students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills, three demonstrated behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the four eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills will demonstrate behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture.

Measurement will be effected by writer review of guidance records.

This objective was achieved. Of the original four eighth grade students who demonstrated a deficiency in social skills, two demonstrated behaviors that are indicative of appropriate social posture at the end of the eight month practicum.

Objective 5

A. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least three of the 12 seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original twelve seventh grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades, four received satisfactory conduct grades at the end of the eight month practicum.

B. At the end of the eight month practicum, at least two of the six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades will receive satisfactory conduct grades. Measurement will be effected by writer review of grade reports.

This objective was achieved. Of the original six eighth grade practicum students who demonstrated non-satisfactory conduct grades, three received satisfactory conduct grades at the end of the eight month practicum.

## Discussion

Excellent results were realized from the eight month practicum effort. In all cases, practicum objectives were realized. However, in the areas of academics, attendance, and self-esteem, practicum expectations were exceeded for both seventh and eighth grade practicum students. Moreover, the eighth grade conduct objective was exceeded. Thus, a substantial improvement in student performance was evident.

As a result of the practicum experience, a number of implications have surfaced. First, it is apparent that the collaborative effort that characterized the eight month practicum effort holds high potential to aid "at-risk" students with learning disabilities in the development of appropriate motivational profiles. Serving as a monitoring and reinforcing system which served to integrate the holistically based practicum infusion of creativity and innovation. Parents, students, educators, and representatives from the community coalesced to provide real-world connections to school based activities. Highly diversified, shareholders consistently provided differing perspectives that had the capacity to constantly rejuvenate the practicum experience and provide opportunities for all to share in the day to day operations. Clearly, students benefited from the positive attitudes of practicum personnel, from the confidence that was consistently displayed in student abilities, and from the level of respect that was generated within the learning environment itself.

Second, parent involvement appears to have a substantially positive influence on student motivation. Witnessed in a previous practicum effort by Buckner (1992), the author noted that quality parent involvement is a critical factor in the ultimate educational success of students with SLD --- a high "at-risk" population. Further indication of the need for parent involvement was evidenced throughout the literature. For example, Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, and Rock (1986) speak to the debilitating effects of lacking parent involvement among socially and economically deprived children. Moreover, Tapply

(1985) expressed concern about evidence that suggests that many parents (and educators) display a certain apathy regarding academic failure, absenteeism, and social deficiencies among students with SLD. Clearly, where quality parent involvement took place during the practicum, students were better able to cope with problems and work toward effective solutions.

Relative to career orientation, Rau et al (1989) found that addressing the vocational needs of students held high importance for educational success. That ideology was highly supported within the practicum effort in that the highest observed area of student interest occurred within the career orientation component where relevancy between real-world activity and educational expectation was established. Thus, from the writer's perspective, implications for the development of positive student motivation through career oriented activity are extremely strong.

Although a few unanticipated events occurred throughout the eight month practicum, each presented interesting opportunities to provide for parallel experience and none compromised the best interests of either students or practicum objectives. First, a change in teacher/staff schedules because of budget cuts precluded a common meeting time during what had been previously scheduled as a common planning period. However, adaptation to the situation was readily accomplished, and the writer connected informally with individual members throughout the practicum. Other than the fact that the mode was a bit more labor intensive for the writer, there was no impact. Actually, the teachers involved welcomed the informal approach because of the increase in duty schedules following the unanticipated budget cut (i.e., hall and cafeteria duty).

Another unanticipated event, which was a direct result of the reduced budget, occurred when guidance counselors were expected to take on new roles. Required to assume additional duties on campus (i.e., monitoring the In-School Suspension Center), counselors no longer had the time to complete classroom observations or to work on individual career goals with practicum students. Although general counseling services continued on a regular basis and students benefited substantially from them, the writer assumed the total responsibility for observations and career development counseling. Similar situations were experienced in cases where resource persons from the district level had been scheduled to provide school-based training sessions and human resources.

For example, when certain staff level jobs were cut to cope with the financial crisis, the previously available district-trained mentors from the compact program were no longer available. Thus, the responsibility of providing parallel experience was assumed by the writer.

While the situation required a higher level of application on the part of the writer, the overture provided the opportunity to integrate practicum components and activities to a greater degree. Ultimately, the situation allowed for more consistent monitoring and was a decided advantage to overall practicum objectives. Another unanticipated event occurred that involved parent involvement. Originally intended to involve parents in a meaningful way, the Parent Telephone Hotline was to have been facilitated and monitored by trained parent volunteers. However, some volunteers took liberties that caused concern for both student confidentiality and for the integrity of the hotline component itself. Although parent volunteers were retrained in appropriate procedures, it was only a short time until the writer assumed total responsibility for the service because another complaint was lodged regarding the same circumstance.

However, service was continued without interruption, and there were no negative consequences.

To summarize, the unanticipated events actually presented exciting challenges and positive opportunities to accommodate to practicum objectives in a parallel mode. Given the fact that the field of education is an evolutionary process and budget constraints continue to disrupt previously planned programs and services, it was only fitting that the practicum would be geared to operate effectively when the need arose. Therefore, all adjustments were constructed to address practicum objectives and to provide quality parallel services. Thus, these few unanticipated events were actually symbolic of real-world situations and, as such, contributed positively to the overall practicum effort.

## Recommendations

1. In schools where low to low-middle socio-economic status is common, it is recommended that parents be polled to determine the most appropriate times to schedule parent oriented gatherings and activities.

2. Because budget cuts have recently become a common event within the educational arena, it is

recommended that back-up resources be planned to accommodate unanticipated events and ensure program continuation.

3. In as much as parents from low to low-middle socio-economic environments often do not work within the conventional 40 hour five day week, it is recommended that creative scheduling be utilized to allow meaningful parent participation which is relevant to their differentiated needs (i.e., working on projects at home, participating in week-end activities as chaperones, or in providing services on a flexible schedule).

4. It is recommended that all advice notices and summaries to school based committees and personnel be accomplished in a concise, brief, informal mode in order to foster the continued interest and participation of all shareholders in practicum objectives and activities.

## Dissemination

1. The writer will publish a handbook containing information relevant to practicum objectives, program description, and applicational strategies which will be distributed through

numerous professional organizations in which the writer either holds the chair or occupies a position on the Board of Directors.

2. The writer will be available to provide training opportunities for educators to avail themselves of strategies and techniques for mediating the "at-risk" profile of students with SLD, developing quality parent/school relationships, and providing relevant career planning opportunities within schools that have limited resources.

3. The writer has offered professional services to the new district adopted alternative education program in order to foster the interests of "at-risk" students with SLD. Serious interest in practicum results has been expressed by numerous educators, and the writer will continue to disseminate information relevant to the practicum to all interested parties.

4. The writer will seek opportunities to present the practicum at local, state, and national conferences.

5. The writer will continue the commitment to the precepts that underlie the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) while

disseminating practicum information, providing services, and enhancing educational opportunities for "at-risk" students with SLD.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A
# STUDENT TRACKING REPORT

# STUDENT TRACKING REPORT

Dear Teachers:

The following student is participating in an "at risk program". Knowing your avid concern as an educator, the School Improvement Committee requests that you complete the following information at the end of each school week and direct it to the "at risk" coordinator and director.

Thank you for your continued interest.

Student Name -

Date -

Subject Area -

Current Grade -

Absences to Date -

Conduct Grade -

# APPENDIX B
# STUDENT STATUS REPORT

## STUDENT STATUS REPORT

1. Student 1.

Name

Grades

Math -

Science -

Social Studies -

Language Arts -

P.E. -

Elective 1 -

Elective 2 -

Absences

| Conduct | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| Positive Performance | | |
| Negative Performance | | |

# APPENDIX C
# PRACTICUM STUDENT/PARENT ROSTER

## PRACTICUM STUDENT/PARENT ROSTER

### SEVENTH GRADE

| NAME | GRADE | PARENT | PHONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6., | | | |
| 7. | | | |
| 8. | | | |
| 9. | | | |
| 10. | | | |
| 11. | | | |
| 12. | | | |

### EIGHTH GRADE

| NAME | GRADE | PARENT | PHONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |
| 4. | | | |
| 5. | | | |
| 6. | | | |

# APPENDIX D
# WHAT'S WORKING IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT?

## WHAT'S WORKING IN PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A pragmatic expose of parent involvement in the educational process, the monthly newspaper has broad appeal for both parents and educators. Its format is dedicated to the provision of school and home based methodology and increasing communication between school and home to enhance student opportunity.

County provided, the paper is under a 1992 copyright to the Parent Institute. Permission has been granted to the county school system to disseminate information and distribute the newspaper at will.

# APPENDIX E
# PARENT TELEPHONE HOTLINE LOG

## PARENT TELEPHONE HOTLINE LOG

STUDENT NAME -

PARENT NAME -

DATE -

TIME -

NATURE OF CONTACT

INFORMATON GIVEN -

INFORMATON RECEIVED -

DISPOSITION -

REFERRED -

# APPENDIX F
# QUALITY CIRCLE STATUS REPORT

# QUALITY CIRCLE STATUS REPORT

Date:

By:

1. Current Program Status:

2. Current Student Status Report (attach Student Status Sheet for each student):

3. Unusual circumstances which have the potential to impact program or student development:

4. Current Outlook:

5. Recommendations:

# APPENDIX G
# SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

# APPENDIX H
# PRACTICUM STUDENT CONTRACT

# PRACTICUM STUDENT CONTRACT

DATE:

In consideration for the opportunity to become the best that I can be, I agree to attend school on a regular basis, bring my materials to class, participate with the teacher and other students during the learning process, complete assigned homework, become involved in project activities, cooperate with all persons connected with the project, and fully invest myself in having fun during the learning experience.

I willingly enter into this contract because I'm worth it!!!

______________________________

Student Signature

______________________________

Project Director Signature

# APPENDIX I
# STAGES ACTIVITY SHEETS

# STAGES ACTIVITY SHEETS

A series of worksheets have been designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop goals and objectives based on real-world orientation. The Stages program provides worksheets which were developed to address a specified goal and purpose. Assessment procedures are provided (Ann Arbor School Board of Education, 1989). Permission has been granted to the practicum school system to use or reproduce at will.

# APPENDIX J

# FAME WORKSHEETS

## FAME WORKSHEETS

A series of worksheets have been designed to provide social focus with the setting. Integrated learning activities underscore the program. Activities are based on real-world orientation. Worksheets, materials, procedures, and wrap-up activities are clearly delineated (Alachua Counlty School Board Gainesville, 1984). The program has been granted to public domain.

# APPENDIX K
# PEER TUTOR/MENTOR APPLICATION AND SCHEDULE

# PEER TUTOR/MENTOR APPLICATION AND SCHEDULE

Date ________________

Applicant Name ______________________________________

Grade ________________

Subject Area of Interest ____________________________

After School Availability:

Monday:

Tuesday:

Wednesday:

Thursday:

Time:

From:

To:

First Teacher Reference:

Second Teacher Reference:

Third Teacher Reference:

## Schedule

| Day | Time | Weekly | Bi-weekly |
|---|---|---|---|

# APPENDIX L
# PEER TUTOR/MENTOR SUPERVISORY REPORT

## PEER TUTOR/MENTOR SUPERVISORY REPORT

Peer Tutor Name ____________________________________

Grade _________________________

Tutee ____________________________________________

Grade _________________________

Subject Area _______________________________________

Day ___________________________

Time __________________________

Supervisor Name ______________________________

Phone __________________________

Summary of Daily Session:

Recommendations:

Next Scheduled Session:

# APPENDIX M
# CHOICES JR. COMPUTER PROGRAM

## CHOICES JR. COMPUTER PROGRAM

On loan from a two year college in the practicum school district, the career preparation program allows students to explore vocational career opportunities in a "hands-on" mode. Interacting with the software, students may select from a variety of menus which address student skills, aptitudes, and interests in numerous vocational orientations. Ultimately, a comprehensive printout is produced to be used as a foundation instrument in the student's ongoing growth and development as each relates to career preparation. Interacting with the software, students may select from a variety of menus which address student skills, aptitudes, and interests in numerous vocational orientations. Ultimately, a comprehensive printout is produced to be used as a foundation instrument in the students' on going growth and development as each relates to career preparation.

Although permission has been granted for its use, it has not for material reproduction.

# APPENDIX N
# PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

# PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT

Date:

By:

1. Current Program Status:

2. Current Student Status Report (attach Student Status Sheet for each participant):

3. Unusual circumstances which have the potential to impact program or student development:

4. Current Outlook:

5. Recommendations:

# APPENDIX O
# STUDENT GOAL SHEET

## STUDENT GOAL SHEET

Student Name:

Date:

## GOAL DEVELOPMENT

Daily Goal:

Rationale:

"How to":

Expected Outcome:

# APPENDIX P
## ORAL REPORT FORM

# ORAL REPORT FORM

Develop your oral report from a newspaper or periodical. Use the following questions to present complete and accurate information:

1. Who?

2. What?

3. When?

4. Where?

5. Why?

and

6. How?

# APPENDIX Q
# MOTIVATIONAL TAPES

# MOTIVATIONAL TAPES

A series of motivational tapes to encourage the development of high self-esteem, increase concentration levels, reduce stress, and allow students to gain information through an auditory mode were used. Designed by Advanced Learning Systems, Inc., the tapes are under a 1983 Copyright, Dept. 1, 13906 Ventura, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.